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Annual report on the implementation of the UNICEF Gender Action Plan

Summary

The present document, prepared in accordance with Executive Board decision 2014/8, provides an annual update on the implementation of the Gender Action Plan (GAP). It includes updates on financial resources and expenditures, using the GAP results matrix, indicators and performance benchmarks.

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I. Introduction

1. In June 2014, the UNICEF Gender Action Plan (GAP) 2014-2017 was operationalized and shared with the Executive Board for information. The Plan maps an agenda for advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in alignment with the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2014-2017. The GAP reflects the organization's commitment to gender equality as core to its mandate and central to the focus on equity in UNICEF efforts to advance the rights of children throughout the world. It elaborates the gender dimensions of UNICEF programmatic results across the seven outcome areas of the Strategic Plan through a focus on targeted gender priorities and gender mainstreaming. The Plan also specifies the strengthening of resources, capacity and systems to which UNICEF is committed. Forty-two indicators to monitor programmatic results on gender across all seven outcome areas are embedded within the Strategic Plan Results Framework. Progress on institutional strengthening is tracked through five performance benchmarks, and the accountability for implementing the GAP and achieving the prioritized results lies with UNICEF management, both at headquarters and in regional and country offices.

2. This report provides an overview of the progress UNICEF has made in implementing the institutional and programmatic components of GAP during 2014, especially since its launch with a presentation to the Executive Board in June 2014. In the seven months through December, there has been significant progress in the implementation of the GAP with regard to building capacity, utilizing resources and pursuing programmatic results, particularly those related to targeted priorities.

3. Programmatic work at the field level has advanced on all four targeted gender priorities — ending child marriage, advancing girls' secondary education, promoting gender-responsive adolescent health, and addressing gender-based violence (GBV) in emergencies, with three-fourths of UNICEF-supported country programmes adopting at least one targeted priority as a core part of their country programme. The area of child marriage has progressed rapidly, with 2014 bringing increased international focus, resources and national commitments to addressing the issue in more than 40 countries. Greater attention to adolescent health and to gender issues in education beyond primary school enrolment, and an increasing concern with GBV in the growing number of emergencies has also provided resonance and momentum to programming across multiple countries. Several efforts at mainstreaming gender in the seven outcome areas through the provision of gender-relevant health, education, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and protection-related support and services have also been successful. UNICEF also worked with other partners to provide technical support to develop appropriate indicators and targets related to all four gender priorities currently being considered as part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

4. Core gender expertise has been enhanced, gender results and accountabilities have been adopted by a majority of country offices in all regions, expenditures on programming to advance gender equality have risen from 8.2 per cent in 2013 to 9.2 per cent in 2014, and the integration of gender in programme evaluations has improved. Gender issues are now more visible across the organization, in major forums and in interactions with external stakeholders. Continuous support and championship by UNICEF leadership at the global and field level has reinforced motivation and accountability for implementing the GAP. An executive-level GAP

Steering Committee, headed by the Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, is in place to monitor and support implementation.

5. Unfinished work and challenges remain as UNICEF moves forward with the Plan's ambitious agenda. Capacity gaps remain, and they have delayed the implementation of robust and more systematic gender programming. More evidence is needed on what is required to address the targeted priorities at scale. Additional work is also needed to strengthen the gender components of the larger, well-funded UNICEF programmes and to deploy the full range of programmatic options for improved service delivery, increased demand generation and positive legislative and policy shifts that advance gender equality. Coherence and synergies in gender programming within and across sectors will take time to evolve. UNICEF remains committed and ready to build on the successful initiation of the GAP implementation and to address these challenges in the future.

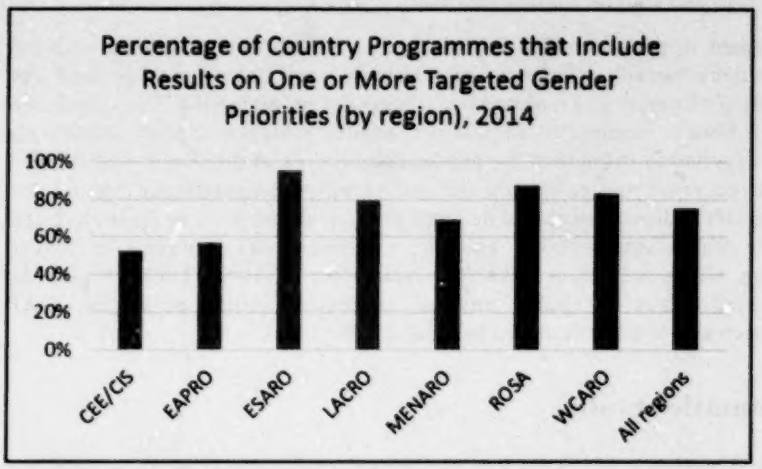
II. Programmatic results

6. The dual approach of the GAP in addressing gender inequality to achieve the Strategic Plan results is based on significant evidence that shows that successful gender programming requires both targeted efforts and gender mainstreaming. The GAP specifies four cross-sectoral targeted priorities: (1) ending child marriage; (2) advancing girls' secondary education; (3) promoting gender-responsive adolescent health; and (4) addressing GBV in emergencies. In addition, gender results are specified within each of the seven outcome areas in the Strategic Plan, reflecting a mainstreaming approach that emphasizes quality over quantity, as well as the prioritized integration of gender in the most relevant programmes in a given country context.

A. Targeted gender priorities

7. In 2014, 75 per cent of UNICEF-supported country programmes included results on one or more targeted priorities of the GAP (figure 1). The proportion is especially high (more than 80 per cent) in Eastern and Southern Africa (ESARO), South Asia (ROSA) and West and Central Africa (WCARO), three regions where the results on these priorities are especially critical. But this number is also close to 80 per cent in Latin America and Caribbean (LACRO). In no region is the proportion less than 50 per cent, suggesting that the targeted gender priorities have resonated as a global priority for UNICEF field offices. The regional and country offices also report that the inclusion of targeted gender priorities in the GAP has made it easier and more compelling for them to specify cross-sectoral results on gender that are relevant to their country contexts.

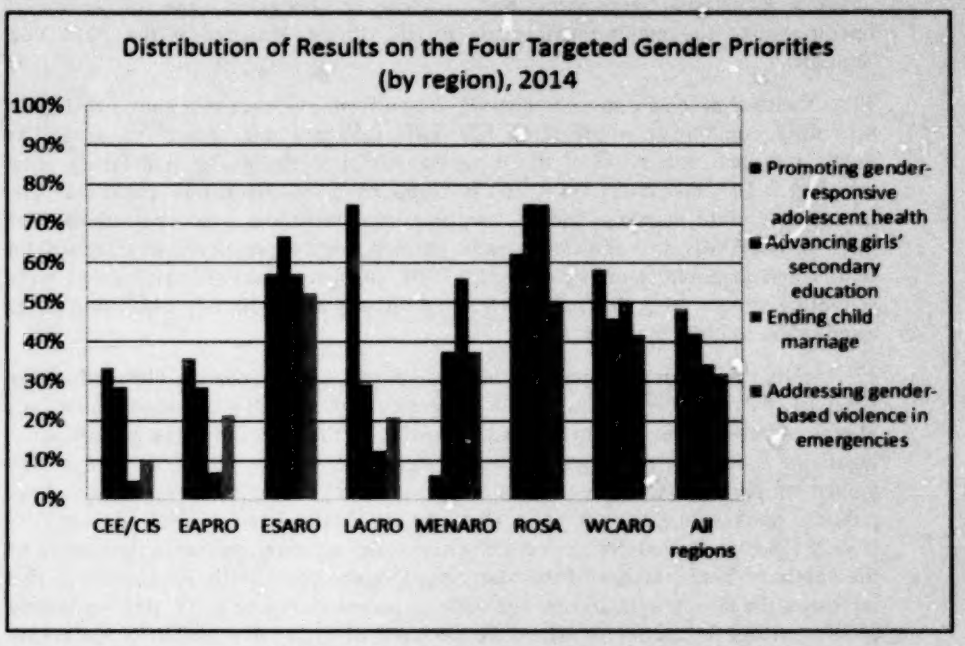
Figure 1



Key: CEE/CIS: Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States; EAPRO: East Asia and Pacific Regional Office; ESARO: Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office; LACRO: Latin America and Caribbean Regional Office; MENARO: Middle East and North Africa Regional Office; ROSA: Regional Office for South Asia; WCARO: West and Central Africa Regional Office.

8. As figure 2 shows, there are clear regional patterns in the targeted priorities selected by country offices in their programmatic results, which are reflective of the local contexts of adolescent girls' lives in these regions. The connection between adolescent health, child marriage and girls' secondary education is evident in the high rates at which ESARO, ROSA and WCARO countries have prioritized these issues. In contrast, in LACRO, adolescent health supersedes all other concerns while in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CEE/CIS) and East Asia and the Pacific (EAPRO), adolescent health and girls' secondary education are prioritized. In the Middle East and North Africa (MENARO), on the other hand, child marriage is the dominant priority, with girls' secondary education and GBV in emergencies also important concerns.

Figure 2



1. Child marriage

9. During 2014, there were several breakthroughs in the recognition of the urgency to end child marriage. With close involvement and support from UNICEF, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and a broad group of girls' rights advocates, Member States adopted substantive resolutions on ending child marriage in the United Nations General Assembly and the Human Rights Council. In July, the Government of the United Kingdom and UNICEF held the Girl Summit, which elicited commitments from 26 Governments. In the report by the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, child marriage was named as a possible target for a goal on gender equality in the Sustainable Development Agenda.

10. Co-leadership of the Girl Summit, compelling data released by UNICEF on the scope of the practice, along with projected trends and in-country negotiations played a role in the commitments made by the Governments of several high-prevalence countries — including Bangladesh, Ethiopia, India, Nepal and Niger — to undertake more concerted action. These countries are now part of the 12-country Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage, co-led by UNICEF and UNFPA and supported by a commitment of more than $80 million from the Governments of Canada, Italy, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

11. In 2014, more than 40 UNICEF programme countries focused on child marriage. Of these, 18 now have national strategies or plans on child marriage, 5 of which have been costed. In **Burkina Faso**, multisectoral consultations involving Government and civil society partners resulted in the implementation of a three-year national strategy and action plan on the abandonment of child marriage (2015-2017). Similarly, UNICEF **Bangladesh** is collaborating with UNFPA and other

development partners to assist the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs to develop a national progamme and a five-year budgeted plan of action to operationalize the commitment made by the Prime Minister at the 2014 Girl Summit.

12. National plans are most frequently drawn from evidence that shows that girls' schooling, community mobilization, life skills, cash and other incentives, as well as media outreach, are some of the most successful strategies for addressing child marriage. To this end, UNICEF is supporting multisectoral packages that incorporate child marriage-specific interventions, including grass-roots work with girls on life skills and adolescent empowerment, or community conversations for family and community engagement. UNICEF supports interventions such as girls' schooling and social protection benefits that directly and indirectly contribute to the elimination of child marriage.

13. UNICEF is also supporting legislative and policy change. In **Indonesia**, UNICEF partnered with civil society organizations (CSOs) to support advocacy efforts to reform the current marriage legislation that discriminates against girls, legalizing the age of marriage for girls at 16 and for boys at 19. These efforts have gained support among Buddhist, Catholic and Islamic religious leaders, who have publicly spoken out against child marriage. In **Malawi**, successful advocacy by UNICEF, other United Nations organizations and national partners contributed to the February 2015 passage of the Marriage, Divorce and Family Relations bill that increased the minimum marriage age without parental consent to 18, thus outlawing child marriage in a country where 50 per cent of girls are married by their 18th birthday.

14. In **Ethiopia**, community mobilization activities to change parental attitudes and social norms are being built around the highly successful grass-roots-based Women's Development Army, which comprises community-level volunteers who are trained by health extension workers and are charged with focusing more intensively on promoting local behaviour change. In **India**, UNICEF has supported 'hot spot' data analysis in four states to identify districts with the highest rates of child marriage and large numbers of girls at risk of child marriage. In partnership with district officers and CSOs, UNICEF is mapping the strength of existing government-sponsored initiatives in these districts to enhance social, educational, health and economic investments in girls. The strongest initiatives will serve as the entry points for sustainable and well-financed leveraging opportunities, not only for preventing child marriages, but also for accelerating changes in the perceptions towards girls.

15. Globally, UNICEF has been working closely with UNFPA, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the *Girls Not Brides* alliance and a range of partners to advocate for the integration of a target on child marriage in the gender equality goal in the Post-2015 framework. As the lead United Nations agency managing the data on child marriage and monitoring progress, UNICEF led a technical consultation to endorse a single indicator (*percentage of women aged 20-24 who were first married or in union by age 18*) for tracking the child marriage target in the Post-2015 Development Agenda. UNICEF will continue to work with partners to undertake rigorous analyses to provide input on specific global and national targets and the mechanisms to monitor them.

16. UNICEF is reinforcing systems across sectors to address child marriage, including assuring that girls are enrolled and retained in school, teachers are adequately trained, adolescent girls' hygiene is supported, social welfare workers have the knowledge and skills to support prevention and response efforts, and that health systems are mobilized to guarantee that girls and women have access to the sexual and reproductive health information and services they require. UNICEF is also strengthening partnerships in social protection, nutrition, WASH, and HIV and AIDS to improve prevention and response efforts. Additional cross-sectoral linkages are being established as implementation of the GAP moves forward.

2. Advancing girls' secondary education

17. Through the open working group process of the Post-2015 framework, UNICEF has played a strong technical role in developing more ambitious and robust indicators on gender equality and learning at all levels of education: primary, secondary and tertiary. Even as countries are making progress — for example, the percentage of programme countries with gender parity in lower secondary school increased from 38 per cent to 40 per cent between January 2014 and January 2015 — much remains to be done. As the focus on gender equality in education shifts from parity at the primary level to second-generation issues such as completion of secondary education and acquisition of relevant skills and learning, UNICEF efforts at local and global levels are transitioning to more concerted efforts in advancing girls' secondary schooling. In 2014, 30 out of 110 countries reported that enrolment, retention and completion of girls' secondary education was a recognized, targeted and budgeted education priority.

18. Although countries in all regions work on girls' secondary education, countries in ESARO, ROSA and WCARO have implemented a four-pronged approach to girls' education and gender equality. This includes: (a) policy advocacy to influence governments and partners to strengthen and adopt policies to improve girls' participation in education; (b) school-community linkages to build awareness of the social and economic value of girls' education, demand accountability and promote girls' education (c) developing and promoting models to demonstrate interventions and create contexts conducive to girls' education; and (d) advocacy to replicate and mainstream innovations that have demonstrated a positive impact on girls' schooling.

19. Advocacy and policy dialogue on girls' secondary education is common to a number of countries, ranging from India and Nepal to Uganda and the **United Republic of Tanzania**. In the United Republic of Tanzania, for example, advocacy efforts contributed to the inclusion in the national Education and Training Policy of a provision allowing school re-entry for girls after the birth of their child. Through successful advocacy and support by UNICEF, more than half of the countries in ESARO, LACRO and WCARO now have such policies in place. Policy shifts on addressing GBV in and around schools is another important area of work. In 2014, 27 out of 100 countries reported progress with regard to national legal and policy frameworks that specify prevention and response mechanisms to school-based gender violence. For example, in **Uganda**, there have been marked improvements in policies related to safety and security of girls in and around schools. This includes the incorporation of the National Strategy and Action Plan for Violence against Children into the Education Management Information Systems, and the use of Edutrac (a mobile-phone based data collection system) as an innovative means of

allowing girls and boys to report violence in schools. By the end of 2014, 48 per cent of all schools in Uganda were using Edutrac (the reports from which are received by the Government) to report cases of violence.

20. Other innovative approaches to promote girls' education were also launched in 2014, for example, in **India** where, at the request of the Government, UNICEF supported the development of an interactive gender atlas that maps a combination of data points, from the demographics of girls in specific age groups, to the number of teachers trained, to girls' retention and transition rates. It also allows for the overlay of critical non-education data such as rates of child marriage and adolescent pregnancy. The atlas will be key to informing management and budgetary decisions on targeted interventions on girls' education. The prototype of the atlas, currently available for one state, will be replicated throughout India in 2015.

21. Initial efforts to influence the girls' secondary education agenda in school systems in many UNICEF programme countries, including Bangladesh, China, Kenya, Maldives, Myanmar and the Syrian Arab Republic, have used life-skills education as an entry point. In **Myanmar**, for example, 30,000 teachers have been trained to implement a secondary life-skills curriculum. In the **Syrian Arab Republic**, UNICEF supported 67 local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and 2,000 male and female youth volunteers in 13 governorates, and provided more than 84,000 internally displaced and/or out-of-school adolescents with alternative learning opportunities, such as life skills basic education for 10-19-year-olds and vocational training for 15-18-year-olds.

22. UNICEF is also strengthening the evidence base on second-generation girls' education issues, such as menstrual hygiene management (MHM) and school-related GBV. An analysis conducted by UNICEF **Zambia** revealed the lack of toilets for girls as a cause for dropout and the uneven distribution of teachers among schools, highlighting the important cross-sectoral linkages between girls' schooling and WASH. UNICEF is using these findings to inform the Government's development of a gender strategy with a focus on girls' education. Through the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) partnership, which is hosted and funded by UNICEF, an initiative to document Good Practice in Girls' Education and Gender Equality was launched in 2013. UNGEI has negotiated a new partnership on school-related GBV with Education International, the global federation of teachers union. UNGEI has also partnered with the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) to develop a gender analysis tool designed to strengthen country-level capacity for gender-responsive sector planning.

3. Promoting gender-responsive adolescent health

23. UNICEF works on gender and adolescent health issues ranging from adolescent pregnancy and anaemia, prevention of HIV and AIDS, human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination, puberty and MHM, to female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C). Adolescent pregnancy remains a significant problem, with little progress made in the last decade. In sub-Saharan Africa, a staggering 27 per cent of girls give birth by age 18; in South Asia, the rate is 22 per cent. [1]

[1] The rate in sub-Saharan Africa is based on 2009-2013 data; the rate in South Asia is based on 2009-2013 data (except for India, which is based on 2005-2006 data).

24. The GAP provides an appropriate framework for addressing cross-sectoral adolescent health issues, allowing for a more integrated response to what are often interrelated life experiences in adolescent lives. In 2014, UNICEF formulated a cohesive adolescent health strategy that builds on existing strengths and opportunities for reaching adolescent girls through the health sector, as well as through other sectors such as education and nutrition, and expands on emerging needs and opportunities in different country contexts. Together with partners, including UNFPA, UNICEF also played an important role in the integration of adolescents in the development of the World Bank's new Global Financing Facility for reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health, which explicitly includes adolescent health within the traditional reproductive, maternal and child health (RMNCH) framework.

25. The role of UNICEF as a partner in Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, and its participation in the HPV vaccination initiative provides an additional avenue for advancing the health of very young adolescent girls. Most Gavi-supported countries are currently in the demonstration phase as a precursor to scale-up of their programmes. In **South Africa**, for example, in 2014 the Integrated School Health Programme administered two doses of HPV vaccine to 300,000 girls in grade 4. UNICEF is using the demonstration phase to engage with ministries of health and education on integrating additional age-appropriate and relevant health services and information for girls, along with vaccine delivery. In Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Malawi, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe, UNICEF has been using the Adolescent Health Intervention Assessment Toolkit to support national identification and prioritization of such services and information. The Ministry of Health in **Malawi**, for example, developed and disseminated information, education and communication materials on broader adolescent health and development issues during social mobilization efforts for the HPV vaccination. The assessment in **Ghana** identified seven promising options to integrate, including nationwide initiatives such as the School Feeding Programme and ReproTalk, a mobile-phone-based intervention to educate adolescents on reproductive health using SMS.

26. AIDS is the second leading cause of death among adolescents globally, and the leading cause of adolescent deaths in Africa. Between 2001 and 2013, AIDS related deaths decreased rapidly among all age groups — about 62 per cent among children 0-4 years and 35 per cent among young people 20-24 years — except for adolescents aged 10-19, where no decrease has been shown. Of the 250,000 new HIV infections among adolescents in 2013, two thirds were among girls 15-19 years old. As part of the effort to reduce AIDS-related mortality and to prevent new HIV infections among adolescents, UNICEF partnered with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the World Health Organization (WHO), UNFPA and key other stakeholders, including youth leaders, to develop "All In", a social movement and platform for action to end the AIDS epidemic among adolescents. Bringing together global commitment to focus on 25 key countries representing all regions, in 2014 of target of a 65 per cent reduction in AIDS-related deaths, a reduction of at least 75 per cent in new HIV infections among adolescents, and zero discrimination by 2020 was set. A framework for action was developed to focus on four areas: engaging adolescent girls and boys as leaders and agents of social change; sharpening national programmes and results through improved data collection, analysis and utilization; fostering innovation in approaches to reach adolescents with life-saving prevention and care; and advocating at global, regional

and country level to generate political will and mobilize resources. UNICEF developed a set of adolescent data assessment tools that are being rolled out with countries following the formal launch of "All In" in early 2015. Following a joint request from UNICEF, UNAIDS and WHO to all countries in 2013 to work towards reporting age- and sex-disaggregated HIV data among adolescents, countries have been provided with support to do so. In 2014, for the first time ever, 6 out of the 38 high-burden countries were able to report age-disaggregated data for the first six months of the year.

27. The Girl Summit in July 2014 led to 20 Governments signing commitments to take concrete action to end FGM/C in their countries. In 2014, 21 programme countries reported interventions around FGM/C, with 17 countries providing specific programming as part of the UNFPA/UNICEF Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting, which now has commitments totalling $54 million. Through the programme's support in 2014, more than 7 million people participated regularly in educational dialogues and some 1,000 communities across 9 countries publicly declared their abandonment of FGM/C. Youth campaigns in Gambia, Kenya, Senegal and Somalia mobilized more than 20,000 youth, who called for an end to the practice.

28. UNICEF is also supporting countries on health programming for adolescent girls through its work on MHM and puberty education. In 2014, 22 countries reported implementing MHM in WASH in Schools (WinS) programmes. UNICEF helped to expand MHM initiatives within and beyond the education system. In **Ghana** and **South Sudan**, this meant the training of teachers and community members, while in the **Plurinational State of Bolivia** and **Rwanda**, this meant the incorporation of MHM requirements in school construction standards. In **Cambodia** and **Uganda**, UNICEF supported the development and distribution of booklets on puberty, while in **India** and **Sri Lanka**, support was provided for participatory education and empowerment campaigns. In **India**, for example, the UNICEF pilot initiative on menstrual hygiene for adolescent girl empowerment, "Girls Today, Women Tomorrow", reached 100,000 girls in seven districts in Bihar, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh states.

29. In 2014, UNICEF also launched the WinS for Girls programme to strengthen evidence-based advocacy and action on MHM and puberty education. The programme is active in 14 countries: Afghanistan, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Eritrea, Ghana, Kyrgyzstan, India, Indonesia, Mongolia, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan and Zambia. It builds national capacity to generate evidence and advocate for girls' MHM and puberty needs and incorporate gender-sensitive guidance on MHM into existing national programmes. The two-year programme is working to reach girls and community members in almost 180 communities.

30. Highlighting the cross-sectoral linkages among the nutrition, education and health sectors in addressing anaemia among adolescent girls, UNICEF **Afghanistan** supported a survey to identify and address widespread anaemia among adolescent girls, both in and out of schools. Similarly, UNICEF supported the Adolescent Girls' Anaemia Control Programme in **India** by including improved knowledge of iron deficiency and the need for food fortification in the guidance on scaling up public health nutrition interventions.

31. In 2014, UNICEF was active in addressing the heightened risk of bullying, violence and stigmatization faced by many adolescents who are transgender, gay, lesbian or bisexual, or who do not conform to idealized gender norms. At least 10 UNICEF country offices undertook advocacy, research, service provision and consultations to advance the rights of adolescents facing discrimination due to their gender identity. For example, UNICEF **Jamaica** supported the NGO Children First to reach 16- to 24-year-old adolescents and young men aged who have sex with men, including those who have been rejected by their families, with HIV prevention, life skills and emotional support services.

4. Addressing gender-based violence in emergencies

32. Gender-based violence was an important concern in 2014, given the large number of humanitarian situations. UNICEF provided GBV-related support to more than 430,000 children, primarily girls and women. These services included health, psychosocial and livelihood support, economic strengthening and access to justice. In addition, more than 420,000 adults and children were reached with information about GBV prevention and response, and more than 53,500 girls and women received dignity kits, including items such as flashlights, clothing and other materials to increase safe mobility and to better manage their menstrual hygiene needs. More than 8,500 service providers were trained on GBV response services. For example, in **Jordan**, 2,520 frontline social workers, health care providers and police and military personnel — half male and half female — were trained on GBV prevention and response.

33. UNICEF **Myanmar** initiated an innovative multisectoral programme in conflict-affected Kachin state, which integrates GBV interventions and child protection services with key nutrition assistance and life-skills education. The programme's centres offer a safe space, particularly for survivors of violence, and promote an environment in which women and girls can feel supported in seeking confidential services.

34. UNICEF played a key leadership role in the June 2014 Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict, co-chaired by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the Government of the United Kingdom, as well as the multi-stakeholder Call to Action to End Violence against Women and Girls in Emergencies, which is currently led by the Government of the United States. UNICEF was also instrumental in finalizing the revision of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's *Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action* (on behalf of the GBV area of responsibility), which will be launched in 2015. The Guidelines set forth standards on GBV risk mitigation across all aspects of humanitarian response. Collectively, UNICEF leadership role in these global policy and advocacy initiatives and global standards development has contributed to humanitarian system strengthening for more consistent and effective prevention, mitigation and response to GBV in emergencies.

B. Interlinkages and scale

35. The focus of the GAP across four targeted priorities presents opportunities for interlinkages that have been readily recognized by staff and partners but have yet to be fully operationalized. Sectoral experts in UNICEF increasingly appreciate that

the solutions to the results they are trying to achieve lie with another sector, which requires them to tap into or contribute to the expertise beyond their own sector. The specification of the gender priorities has also accelerated fundraising and programming on the targeted initiatives at UNICEF. In 2014, more than $75 million was mobilized at the global and regional level, with a primary focus on advancing adolescent girls' rights and well-being around the four targeted priorities, with additional resources mobilized at country level. The increased resources present an opportunity to programme at scale, while also contributing to expanding the existing evidence on targeted initiatives.

36. UNICEF will have to seek out innovative means of addressing the multidimensional and gendered aspects of adolescent life, needs and opportunities at scale. Better models and evidence on interlinkages and scale will be especially valuable given the increased recognition of the importance of investing — especially in girls — in the second decade of life.

C. Progress on gender mainstreaming

37. During 2014, there was demonstrable progress in mainstreaming gender in sectoral programming with a focus on maximizing opportunities within and across sectors to not only meet the specific needs of girls and women, but also to help reshape gender relations in terms of opportunities, burdens, responsibilities and expectations for men and women.

38. Eighty per cent of UNICEF-supported country programmes of cooperation included one or more gender mainstreaming results across the seven result areas (figure 3). While ESARO and ROSA led the way, with close to 90 per cent of country programmes specifying one or more gender mainstreaming results, the rate was not lower than 70 per cent in any region.

Figure 3

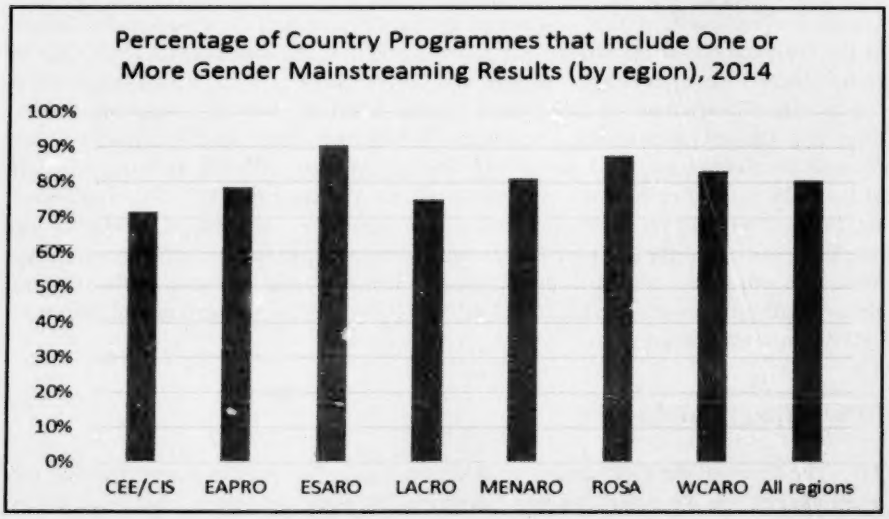
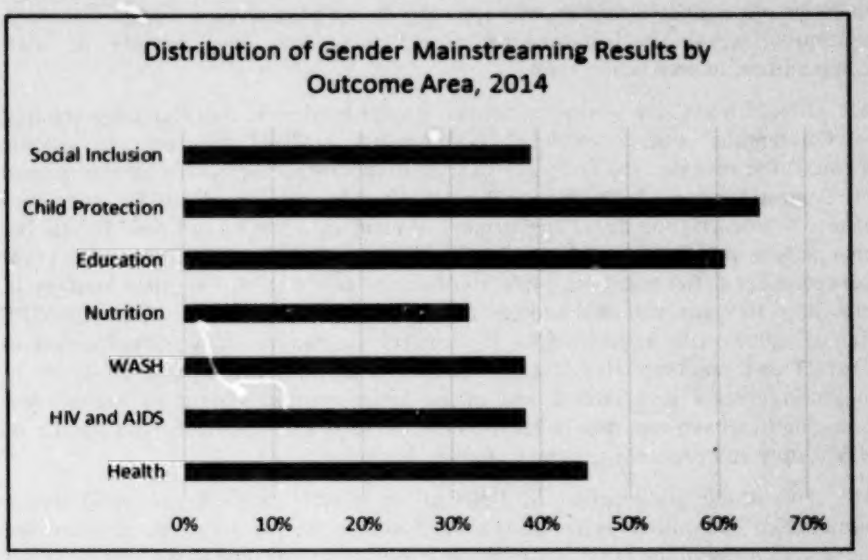


Figure 4



1. Health, HIV and AIDS and Nutrition

39. Maternal health is an important dimension of gender equality, affirming women's right to bear children when they want, safely, with dignity and without endangering their lives. It is also one of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on which progress has been insufficient. The global rate of women delivering with skilled attendance rose by only 12 percentage points since 1990 — from 57 in 1990 to 69 per cent in 2013 — still leaving almost one third of women delivering their babies without skilled attendance.

40. An important area of progress has been the proportion of pregnant women living with HIV who receive antiretroviral medicines for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) of HIV. The percentage more than doubled from 33 per cent to 68 per cent between 2009 and 2013 in the 22 priority countries that account for 90 per cent of new HIV infections among children. In 2012, UNICEF led advocacy efforts to offer treatment to all pregnant and lactating women living with HIV, putting the health of mothers first in efforts to eliminate mother-to-child transmission. By the end of 2014, all 22 priority countries had shifted their policies to this approach, and 100,000 more pregnant women living with HIV received antiretroviral treatment in 2013 as compared to 2012.

41. As part of the Catalytic Initiative/Integrated Health Systems Strengthening programme in Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique and Niger, 50,000 community health workers were trained in integrated community case management (iCCM), 75 per cent of whom were female. In **Ethiopia**, since the inception of the iCCM programme, more than 30,000 female health extension workers have been recruited, trained and deployed to approximately 14,000 health posts throughout the country. The Ministry of Health in Ethiopia is currently reviewing options for career advancement among the female health extension workers. These changes will address the issue of gender equality in the health sector, where the majority of

health workers above the community level are male. The presence of health workers in communities allows women, who typically do not have enough time or resources, transportation, or decision-making power to access care outside of their communities, to seek health care.

42. UNICEF has also worked to address gender barriers in nutrition programming in **Guatemala**, where bottleneck and barriers analysis for reducing chronic malnutrition revealed the complete lack of decision-making power among women on domestic issues, including on household food security. UNICEF supported efforts to intensify the direct engagement of men, encouraging not only female but also male responsibility for the well-being of children, and supporting men as vocal advocates for better nutrition. Male involvement was also an important strategy in providing HIV and maternal and child health services in **Malawi**, where UNICEF trained 4,000 male motivators in 13 districts to promote men's involvement in PMTCT and paediatric HIV. Traditional leaders are now playing a critical role in promoting men's involvement and in protecting women's right to health care. Communities have reported increased rates of early antenatal care and uptake of HIV testing and counselling among couples as a result.

43. The strong participation of UNICEF in global maternal and child health partnerships and initiatives has been another avenue for promoting progress toward the goals set out in the GAP. For example, UNICEF is engaged in the update of the *Every Woman Every Child* global strategy for the health of women and children, and in the broader United Nations process to define the SDGs, the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health, the RMNCH Steering Committee and the affiliated Allocation Committee of the RMNCH Trust Fund. In all of these mechanisms, UNICEF advocates for women's right to health. As a member of the Board of Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, UNICEF also supported the revision and approval of the Gavi gender policy and the more substantial integration of gender in its new strategic plan.

2. Water, sanitation and hygiene

44. As a result of UNICEF direct support in 2014, more than 10,500 schools and some 1,200 health centres had new or upgraded WASH facilities. UNICEF and its partners commissioned gender assessments in the WASH sector in Kiribati, Rwanda and Sudan. UNICEF encouraged the active participation of women — especially in leadership roles — in the management of community WASH committees. In **Ghana**, for example, district- and community-level training on gender-responsive approaches to WASH expanded local capacity. In **Ethiopia**, the UNICEF WASH and nutrition sections commenced implementation of the 2014-2017 Gender Analysis and Action Plan with the establishment of a joint working group led by the Ministries of Health and Education and tasked with the development of a national guideline on MHM.

45. In 2014, UNICEF supported more than 1.7 million women and girls affected by humanitarian crises with MHM materials. In **South Sudan**, hygiene kits were provided to 500,000 conflict-affected women and girls. In **Iraq**, which was among the largest emergency WASH programmes, UNICEF supported efforts to establish latrines, showers and bathing units that ensured privacy and dignity for women and girls. Additionally, gender was mainstreamed in all hygiene promotion activities, taking into account how women and men use water and sanitation facilities. To

ensure private and hygienic facilities in IDP shelters and schools in the **Syrian Arab Republic**, UNICEF established and guided the implementation of gender-based standards in the construction of WASH facilities. In IDP shelters, emphasis was placed on providing adequate water storage capacity to reduce women's time burden in obtaining water. To adequately reflect the gendered nature of hygiene promotion messages, efforts were made to include a large number of women as health promoters, resulting in 42 per cent of trained promoters being women.

3. Education

46. In addition to a targeted focus on girls' secondary schooling, UNICEF continues to emphasize promoting gender equality and not only parity in pre-primary and primary education, in development, conflict and peacebuilding settings. Through the Peace Building, Education and Advocacy (PBEA) programme, UNICEF supports Governments, partners and direct and indirect beneficiaries across 14 countries to strengthen social cohesion, human security and resilience. In the Karamoja region of **Uganda**, a PBEA pilot programme that was structured for a rigorous impact evaluation and likely scale-up with the Government, trained primary schoolteachers so they could promote positive gender ideals for boys and girls. The programme also uses the new UNICEF mobile SMS platform, Gendertrac, as an interactive tool to reinforce learning outcomes on gender socialization.

47. Gender socialization and evidence strengthening have also been part of the organization's work in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**. UNICEF has supported the Government and local communities in the revision of primary school manuals to make them more gender sensitive and in the development of gender-sensitive data-collection tools. UNICEF has helped the Government and CSOs to increase and strengthen their capacity to conduct gender-sensitive analyses.

48. In several countries, UNICEF has supported efforts to reach out-of-school girls. For example, in the **Syrian Arab Republic**, where girls comprise the majority of out-of-school children, nearly 150,000 girls were supported through 500 school clubs, with the objective of bringing them back in to the school system. School clubs typically operate in settings that parents can consider safe for girls, such as school compounds or centres in shelters for IDPs.

49. UNICEF also continues to play a strong leadership role in the GPE, supporting the delivery of resources, providing policy guidance and on-the-ground support in 39 out of the GPE 60 partner countries where educational systems need strengthening and girls are often disadvantaged in gaining an education.

4. Child protection

50. In addition to the targeted gender priorities of ending child marriage and preventing GBV in emergencies, as a key institutional focus UNICEF addressed the prevention of GBV among children more broadly. UNICEF also addressed gender barriers to children securing their rights, for example in birth registration (see paragraph 53).

51. Several country offices supported efforts to strengthen legislation and policies to prevent GBV. In the **Lao People's Democratic Republic**, UNICEF successfully advocated for a planned domestic violence law to be broadened to cover all forms of violence against women and children in all settings. Similarly, in **Sierra Leone**,

UNICEF supported the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs to expand the National Referral Protocol on Gender Based Violence to include everyone: boys, girls, men and women, resulting in the subsequent implementation of the Protocol.

52. While gender parity in birth registration is noted in most countries with available data, national experiences suggest that gendered roles and expectations can inhibit the registration of both girls and boys at birth. These range from requiring fathers to be present at registration to not allowing unmarried mothers to register their children. In 2014, UNICEF began mapping the legal frameworks around birth registration in South Africa, Swaziland and Zimbabwe in order to document and address such barriers so as to accelerate birth registration for all children. UNICEF plans to build on these efforts and carry out such mapping in an additional 35 countries in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

5. Social inclusion

53. Mainstreaming gender in social inclusion is crucial because protection systems are often aimed at households in the aggregate, thus making them gender-blind. Women-headed households all over the world disproportionately experience greater multidimensional poverty as compared to households headed by men. Where social benefits and protections are geared towards female-headed households, they allow women to meet their urgent obligations and also contribute to their longer-term economic opportunities.

54. In **Albania**, for example, UNICEF supported efforts to strengthen the enabling environment through an analysis of the impact of early childhood care services on women's ability to gain and maintain paid employment. UNICEF also worked with the World Bank, the International Labour Organization and UN-Women to generate knowledge on the linkages between women's economic empowerment and child care in low-income countries so as to propose policy options that can lead to improvements in both areas.

D. Integrating gender for transformative impact

55. It is encouraging that, as of 2014, UNICEF country offices are moving towards a more explicit recognition and articulation of their work on gender equality, and are more frequently identifying and acting upon important entry points within their existing areas of work to either integrate or address a gender dimension. The work moving forward will require more deliberate assessments of the most strategic entry points where the gender impact is both transformative and at scale.

56. It will be especially important to undertake such assessments in existing areas of work, so as to maximize the opportunities for systemic impact. For example, maternal and child health, nutrition, WASH, child protection and emergencies all present important areas of strength where the integration of one or two critical gender elements can lead to substantive and transformative results for women and girls. It will also be important, however, to explore the neglected or emerging areas where UNICEF is well-positioned to influence systems that have large infrastructure and resources. Issues such as sex differentials in childhood health care and mortality rates, for example, or women's roles in health and education systems, or in the

design, implementation and maintenance of water and sanitation systems, will need to be explored as both challenges and opportunities.

57. Based on the positive achievements and lessons learned thus far, UNICEF will continue to produce and draw upon successful approaches that showcase a systematic shift towards stronger, scaled-up programming on gender across the organization.

III. Institutional strengthening

58. The scope of the programme of work specified in the GAP is practical but ambitious, and UNICEF is investing in the required staffing, capacity and systems support for its full implementation. UNICEF is also adapting its institutional framework to align with the UN System-wide Action Plan (SWAP) for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, endorsed by the United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination in 2012 as a measure to increase accountability and oversight for confirming gender equality results across the United Nations system. The GAP specifies five benchmarks against which improvements in institutional capacity and systems to support gender equality results are being tracked: (1) Effective knowledge sharing and communications for promoting gender equality; (2) Gender staffing and capacity across the organization; (3) Gender performance of country programme management plans; (4) Gender performance on evaluations of UNICEF programmes; and (5) Programme expenditures on gender results.

A. Effective knowledge sharing and communications

59. UNICEF has communicated about the GAP and its key elements both internally and externally, beginning with a communication, in June 2014, from the Executive Director to all UNICEF staff. In August 2014, the Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, elaborated on the importance of the GAP in a "Five Questions" interview with the UNICEF Intranet site. In addition, the senior leadership also focused on the relevance of the GAP for the work of the organization during a question and answer session at an all-staff meeting held in August 2014. The importance of the GAP for field-based results has been communicated at regional and country management team meetings, sectoral network meetings and senior staff strategy and planning meetings. The gender team at headquarters has also held webinars with senior management, planning officers, gender focal points and sectoral specialists in the field to emphasize the importance of GAP-specified priorities for achieving field-level results. A one page infographic that captures UNICEF accountabilities and priorities in the GAP has been shared across the organization, and comprehensive talking points and presentations have been disseminated to senior staff in country offices. The GAP has also been shared with external partners, including National Committees for UNICEF, United Nations sister agencies and the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality.

60. Girls and gender equality were more prominent not only in internal forums, but also in UNICEF communications and advocacy efforts at global forums with external partners and other key stakeholders. The UNICEF Global Communication and Public Advocacy Strategy 2014-2017 highlights gender as a central and cross-

cutting area. Across the global homepage <www.unicef.org>, in social media and at key events such as the Commission on the Status of Women and the International Day of the Girl Child, UNICEF offices are sharing highlights of their gender-focused initiatives and results.

61. The innovative campaign #investingirls, in conjunction with the side event titled "Investing in Girls' Empowerment for MDG Acceleration" held at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland in January 2014, helped UNICEF to raise the profile of girls as a development priority while presenting the investment case for their empowerment. Millions of people in 140 countries joined this social media-driven campaign, including major gender champions; as a result, #investingirls was ranked first among development topics at the Forum. In 2014, UNICEF, UNFPA and partners also launched a major campaign, in partnership with the African Union, to raise awareness, mobilize a social movement across the continent to end child marriage and strengthen African families.

62. UNICEF leadership and staff are maximizing opportunities for incorporating and championing GAP programming priorities in discussions with partners and in programming, advocacy and resource mobilization forums. One of the most visible gender-related events of 2014 was the Girl Summit, hosted by the Government of the United Kingdom and UNICEF. Some communication highlights include a press release, an op-ed, several features in leading newspapers and social media engagement on Facebook, which reached more than 9 million users, and on Twitter, which had more than 414 million impressions.

B. Gender staffing and capacity

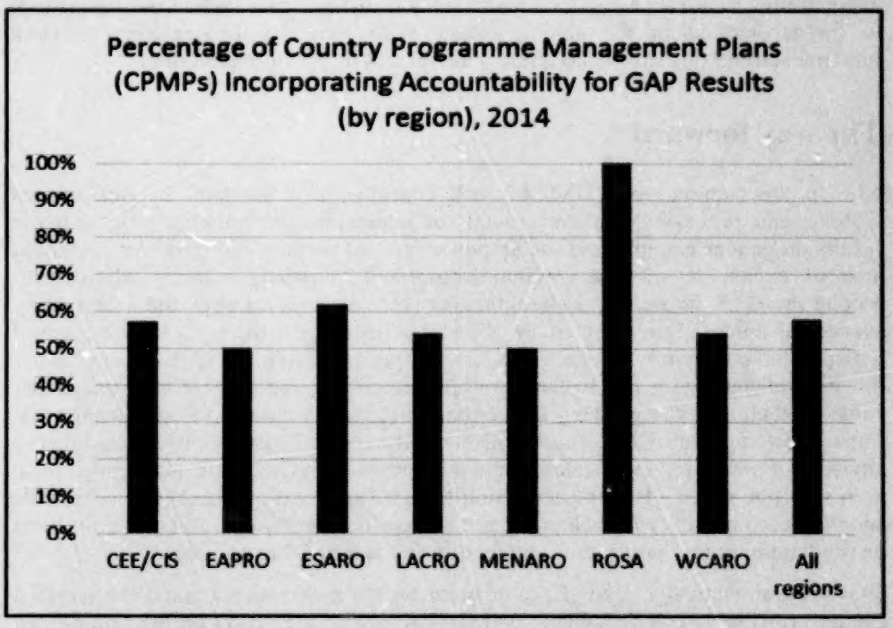
63. The GAP specifies a strengthened gender architecture as essential for effectively carrying out the programming priorities on gender equality and empowerment of women and girls. In 2014, the primary focus was on laying a strong foundation of senior-level expertise on gender. To this end, the recruitment of seven regional gender advisers, one in each UNICEF regional office and one additional senior-level gender specialist at headquarters, is nearly complete. The recruitment of an additional senior gender specialist at headquarters as well as two coordinators, one for each of the targeted gender priorities of child marriage and girls' secondary education, is underway. Moreover, even within the short seven months since operationalization of the GAP, there has been progress on enhancing gender expertise in UNICEF country offices, with gender specialists in place in eight country offices and with plans to hire in nine additional country offices.

64. Steady progress continues to be made in efforts to achieve gender parity in senior-level posts. In 2014, 45 per cent of all P-5 or higher positions were held by women, as compared to 42 per cent in 2012 and 44 per cent in 2013. Other measures implemented have included gender-balanced selection panels and shortlists of candidates, particularly in the senior staff category. Furthermore, a pilot initiative is underway to develop talent among women and nationals of programme countries. This is in line with the organization's commitment to develop a pipeline of talent that is readily available for leadership opportunities and to facilitate systematic succession planning.

C. Gender performance of country programme management plans

65. Since the adoption of the GAP, all seven UNICEF regions have adjusted their regional office management plans to incorporate or further articulate gender results. There has also been significant progress at the country level, with 58 per cent of country programme management plans (CPMPs) already outlining specific country office accountabilities with respect to gender results and the implementation of the Plan (figure 5). Many of these country offices are developing concrete action plans that can be incorporated in their annual workplans to implement and monitor the results they have achieved. There is regional variation, with ROSA (which comprises eight country offices) reporting 100 per cent of CPMPs incorporating accountability for GAP results, followed by ESARO at 62 per cent (13 out of 21 countries) of CPMPs specifying accountability for results. All regions have achieved at least 50 per cent, which indicates a promising start. Continued progression is expected in the coming months.

Figure 5



D. Gender performance on evaluations of UNICEF programmes

66. The incorporation of gender equality as a core element of programme evaluations at UNICEF has been an ongoing concern; previous analyses have shown that a majority of UNICEF evaluations were either not addressing gender, or were doing so in a less than satisfactory manner. UNICEF has begun to address this gap. The proportion of evaluations rated 'outstanding' and 'highly satisfactory' in incorporating gender rose from 47 per cent in 2012 to 55 per cent in 2013, according to the UNICEF Global Evaluation Reports Oversight System rating. The greatest areas of improvement were data collection and methodological robustness,

both of which provided a stronger basis for assessing results. While this is a positive step, more needs to be done to strengthen the overall integration of gender in programme evaluations. To this end, in 2015, the gender section and the Evaluation Office are refining the guidance on programme evaluations for further alignment with the GAP.

E. Programme expenditures on gender results

67. In line with the UN-SWAP for gender, UNICEF set a financial benchmark that stipulated that, by the end of 2017, 15 per cent of programme expenditures would be spent on advancing gender equality and the empowerment of girls and women. The baseline of 8.2 per cent in 2013 was based on a combined analysis of the Gender Equality Marker (which tags each output as contributing to gender equality principally, significantly, marginally, or not at all) and the gender-relevance of the specific activities undertaken to achieve all outputs. The expenditures covered development and humanitarian programming, and both regular resources and other resources. The same analysis for 2014 shows that in the past year, programme expenditures to advance gender equality rose to 9.2 per cent. While the pace needs to be accelerated in the coming years, with only six full months of GAP implementation, this shift is certainly a movement in the right direction.

IV. The way forward

68. In the coming year, UNICEF will continue to strengthen the institutional systems and processes that are crucial for achieving and tracking programmatic results on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. An important area of expansion will be communication and knowledge-sharing mechanisms around the GAP, in particular strengthening learning opportunities and highlighting successful models implemented by country offices. Establishing a strong internal network and community of practice on gender programming is a high priority, as are the interlinkages with the wider development efforts and partnerships on gender equality, including the growing momentum around investments in adolescent girls. Capacity strengthening on gender will be continued in 2015. With regional gender advisers in place, targeted training and support to technical staff and gender focal points will be especially important. Similarly, with increasing numbers of countries adopting accountability for achieving gender results, continued evolution in guidance on programming for these results and monitoring and tracking progress is key.

69. Programmatically, UNICEF will build on the momentum around the targeted gender priorities, exploring viable pathways to accelerate action on the ground and identifying intervention options that more directly reach large numbers of girls. It will also investigate and assess how the strongest and largest UNICEF programme areas can help to deliver transformative change for girls and women, men and boys.

70. The year 2015 is critical for the agenda for women and girls, not least because of the milestone events that are on the calendar: the deadline for the achievement of the MDGs, adoption of the SDGs, the 20-year review and appraisal of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the 15-year review of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). Building on these positive trends with respect to gender equality, UNICEF will continue to implement the ambitious agenda it has set out in the Gender Action Plan 2014-2017.

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Report of the Ethics Office of UNICEF for 2014

Summary

The present report is submitted to the UNICEF Executive Board in accordance with section 5.4 of the Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/2007/11, "United Nations system-wide application of ethics: separately administered organs and programmes" and with UNICEF Executive Board decisions 2010/18 and 2014/12. The report was reviewed by the Ethics Panel of the United Nations at its 66th session.

This annual report covers each of the mandated areas of work for the Office: (a) standards-setting and policy support; (b) training, education and outreach; (c) advice and guidance; (d) the Financial Disclosure Programme; (e) protection of staff against retaliation; and (f) participation in the Ethics Panel of the United Nations and Ethics Network for Multilateral Organizations. In accordance with Executive Board decision 2014/12, the report also presents recommendations to management to strengthen the organizational culture of integrity and compliance.

During 2014, the Ethics Office had three priorities: (a) to increase staff awareness of the ethics of international civil service; (b) to enhance understanding of how to avoid or mitigate conflicts of interest; and (c) to promote a "speak up" culture in UNICEF. The main means to make progress in these areas were the Financial Disclosure Programme, confidential advice given to staff members as well as to office managers, training and support given to country office volunteer Ethics Dialogue Facilitators, the inclusion of ethical considerations in the development of policy and guidelines, and the sharing of experience within the United Nations system.

* E/ICEF/2015/4.

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Introduction and general information on activities of the Ethics Office

1. The activities of the Ethics Office were undertaken in the following mandated areas of work:

(a) Provide guidance and policy support to management on ethics standards-setting by reviewing and advising on the rules, policies, procedures and practices of the organization in order to reinforce and promote the highest standards of ethics and integrity as required by the Charter of the United Nations, other applicable staff rules and regulations, and the standards of conduct for the international civil service;

(b) Raise staff awareness about United Nations values and expected standards of conduct and procedures, and the importance of these for delivering sustainable results for children, through staff orientation programmes, training and other outreach;

(c) Provide confidential advice and guidance to staff and management, at their request, on ethics-related policy and practice issues, including conflict of interest, financial disclosure, fostering a "speak up" culture, and protection against retaliation;

(d) Administer the Financial Disclosure Programme;

(e) Undertake assigned responsibilities under the policy on protection against retaliation;

(f) Contribute to harmonized approaches to ethics issues within the United Nations System.

2. The Ethics Office received 261 requests for its services in 2014. This compares to 221 requests in 2012 and 271 in 2013. The office is receiving increasingly diverse requests for ethics advice, including assistance with ethical decision-making by managers of offices and programmes.

3. Of the 261 requests received in 2014, the largest component (47 per cent) related to services provided under the advisory and guidance function of the Office, followed by requests for training-related services (16 per cent). There was an increase in the number of requests related to protection against retaliation, from two in 2013 to seven in 2014. Only one query related to the Financial Disclosure Programme; this low number reflects the maturity of the programme. Figure I shows the percentage distribution of the different types of service requests. Table 1 summarizes the services provided by the Ethics Office over the three-year period, 2012-2014.

4. Throughout 2014, the Ethics Office continued to work closely with offices across UNICEF, aiming to promote common and complementary messaging. Through collaboration, the office also provided inputs and advice on issues of organizational ethics to offices with regulatory authority. The Ethics Office itself, due to its independent advisory nature, does not possess regulatory authority. Collaboration continued with the Division of Human Resources (DHR), Office of Internal Audit and Investigations (OIAI), Office of the UNICEF Legal Adviser, Information Technology Solutions and Services Division, Supply Division and the Staff Association at global and regional levels. Communication remained close with regional offices. The Ethics Office met regularly with the Office of the Executive Director.

Figure I
Number of requests for ethics services by category, 2014

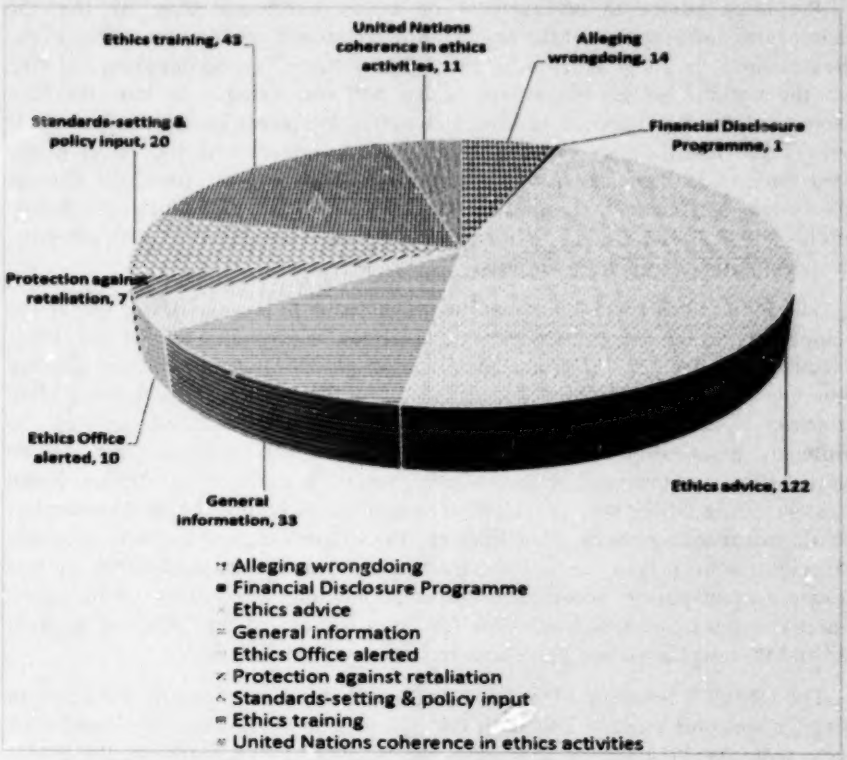


Table 1
Comparison of the number of ethics requests for services by category, 2012 to 2014

Category	*2012*	*2013*	*2014*
Alleging wrongdoing[a]	0	21	14
Ethics advice	146	121	122
Financial disclosure	32	24	1
General information	10	20	33
Ethics Office alerted[b]	0	9	10
Protection against retaliation	5	2	7
Standards-setting and policy input	18	23	20
Ethics training	10	51	43
United Nations ethics activity coherence[c]	0	0	11
Total	**221**	**271**	**261**

[a] This category was separated from ethics advice in 2013.
[b] Ethics Office alerted to monitor for action as needed.
[c] This category was separate from ethics advice and general information in 2014.

Standards-setting and policy support

5. Providing advice to management on ethics standards-setting, so that the policies, rules and practices of the organization reflect and promote the values of the United Nations, is a key function of the Ethics Office. This advice does not stop when the policies or guidelines are issued but also extends to how they are implemented. As the organization fosters increased awareness among staff members about the fact that they are expected to align their conduct with the values of the United Nations, staff members will in turn increasingly expect procedural fairness of the system. Therefore, it is important that the policies and guidelines are not only explicitly aligned with United Nations values but also implemented with integrity, with special attention given to fairness.

6. The Ethics Office worked across the organization to provide advice during the development of a number of policies and guidelines. In providing advice, the Office has focused on reviewing the proposed policies or guidelines to see whether they are addressing issues of ethics, especially conflicts of interest, including post-employment restrictions, and impartiality. For guidelines relating to recruitment, partnership or procurement of goods or services, the Ethics Office advised offices on the need to assess core values in addition to efficiency and competence. The Office was consulted on a number of issues: the development of the child safeguarding policy; guidelines on ethics in research on and with children; engagement with private sector; contracting of consultants and services, and post-employment policy; accountabilities to populations affected by emergencies; the Ebola response; revised guidelines for investigations of the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations; and guidelines for external publications.

7. The UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014-2017, includes a management indicator on fostering a speak-up culture. This indicator is measured by the biennial Global Staff Survey, with the 2014 survey serving as the baseline. For this reason, the Ethics Office provided advice to management during the development of the 2014 survey.

8. Collaboration with DHR has been important in the provision of consistent advice to staff on the organization's policy (CF/EXD/2012-009) regarding outside activities, such as those relating to board memberships, charitable activities and publications (see the United Nations administrative instructions ST/AI/2000/13 and the information circular ST/IC/2006/30). The Ethics Office also had frequent consultation with OIAI, the Office of the Ombudsman and the Staff Counsellor's Office to improve understanding of the risks that the organization faces if ethics are breached.

Training, education and outreach

9. The Ethics Office promotes awareness of the expected behaviour of those working in the international civil service so that the values of the United Nations become tangible. The training also aims to promote awareness of the cognitive biases that can make it difficult for staff members to consistently adhere to these standards of behaviour and to policies in daily decision-making. The conversations on ethics address recognition of conflicts of interest and related dilemmas, challenges to impartiality and the risks posed when over-conformity may inhibit speaking up.

10. Ethical leadership is key to fostering ethical organizational culture. For this reason, the Ethics Office works with regional management teams, DHR-managed leadership programmes for role-based training, and with country management teams specifically on the role of leaders. In terms of role-based training, materials on ethics in fundraising and partnership-building was also made available at country, regional and headquarters levels.

11. In 2014, the Ethics Office received 43 requests for training support. This figure does not include the web-based sessions held to train a cadre of local ethics-dialogue facilitators. The office responded to the 43 requests through three modalities: (a) face-to-face group training sessions at headquarters, regional and country offices; (b) provision of material and tutoring of facilitators for local ethics dialogues organized by individual offices; and (c) briefings and other provision of information.

12. A total of 855 staff members were trained face to face. This does not include shorter briefings of groups or individuals on site, leadership training, support to local training via Skype or other special training on partnership and fundraising. It also does not include the number of Ethics Dialogue Facilitators trained using web-based methods. The various training activities are listed in table 2 below.

13. The Ethics Office, in collaboration with the regional offices and the Division of Human Resources, piloted the Ethics Dialogue Facilitator initiative in late 2013. In 2014, this initiative was taken to scale. The facilitators are trained to use modules that cover the values of the United Nations, the standards of conduct for international civil service, conflicts of interest, fraud and misconduct, protection against retaliation, and public service and private life. These were developed in collaboration with DHR, OIAI, the Office of the UNICEF Legal Advisor, Supply Division, Division of Financial and Administrative Management, and regional offices. Each module consists of case studies, discussion and presentation, and can be completed in less than 90 minutes. Modules are available in English, French and Spanish. A total of 150 Ethics Dialogue Facilitators were trained in 71 countries using web-based training, which took place throughout the year. In 2014, these facilitators conducted 25 dialogue sessions in 19 country offices. Following their local training sessions, these facilitators sent queries to the Ethics Office regarding specific ethical dilemmas the staff members face. The objective of the initiative is to enable country offices to carry out shorter but more frequent ethics dialogues in order to create a habit of ethical reflection at the time of decision-making.

14. In November 2014, a new online basic ethics awareness course, adapted from the United Nations Secretariat e-learning course, was finalized in English. It is being translated into French and Spanish in time for the anticipated launch of the course in the first quarter of 2015. It is expected to be mandatory for all current staff and included in the induction package for all new staff.

15. Ten of the training requests received by the Ethics Office were for materials or advice on conducting local ethics training sessions. The Ethics Office sent material, including a tailor-made video message, and in some cases engaged in dialogue with the facilitators before and after the session.

16. The Ethics Office also responded to a request for advice and material for the development of training for the Harmonized Approach for Cash Transfers (HACT). The office was pleased to note that ethics and integrity are considered important components of HACT implementation. The Office also noted as a positive trend the

increased attention paid by internal auditors to ethics training and awareness-raising on ethics by office management.

17. The Ethics Office values its collaboration with Supply Division, which conducts training on managing procurement and contracts. Integrity in procurement and contracts management is part of the basic training package. In 2014, Supply Division conducted six different sessions on integrity issues with a total of 557 participants. Among these were 158 staff members from offices and divisions other than Supply, with 145 from field offices and 13 from headquarters. The Ethics Office continues to exchange information and experience with the Supply Division training team.

Table 2
Training sessions held in 2014

	On-site training				
	Staff and ethics	*Leadership and ethics*	*Special topics*	*On-site briefings*	*Web-based training or support*
Country and regional offices	Bangladesh Cambodia Cameroon Côte d'Ivoire Philippines Thailand Timor-Leste Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office West and Central Africa Regional Office (WCARO) East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO) Staff Association Chairs	*Regional management teams*: South Asia WCARO *Country/office management teams*: Bangladesh Cambodia Cameroon Philippines Thailand Timor-Leste EAPRO	Thailand EAPRO Division of Public Partnerships	New human resource chief for WCARO	Ecuador Zambia Ethics Dialogue Facilitators
Headquarters	OIAI New and Emerging Talent Initiative		New York Staff Association-organized interaction with staff; Division of Public Partnerships	Senior Staff Review Panel; Supply Division contracting staff; DHR and regional human resource chiefs	

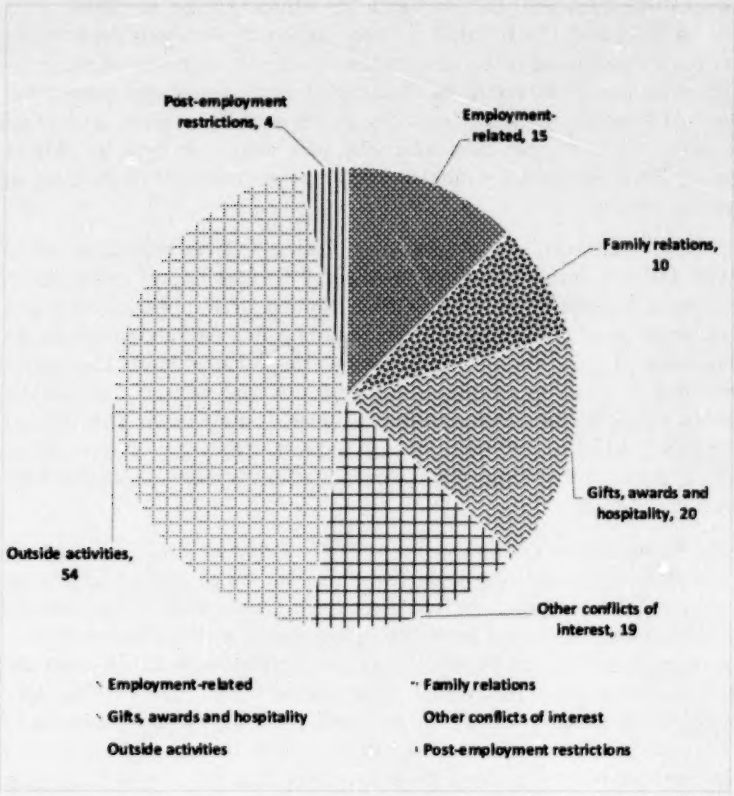
Advice and guidance

18. The Ethics Office received 122 requests for ethics advice in 2014. This compares to 146 in 2012 and 121 in 2013. As seen in Figure II, a vast majority of requests (88 per cent) continue to relate to conflicts of interest in the broad sense — related to outside activities, gifts, family relations, post-employment and other areas prone to conflicts of interest. While the majority of requests come from individual staff members, many are now from managers who seek advice on how to address ethical dilemmas at UNICEF vis-à-vis outside entities or as managers responding to staff requests and questions.

19. With regard to conflicts of interest, the Ethics Office maintains close collaboration with DHR in terms of advice provided. The majority of questions in this category continues to come to the Ethics Office through DHR, although there is a welcome increase in the number of requests from country office staff and management regarding management of conflicts of interest for locally recruited staff. The Ethics Office has continued to develop templates for guidance and recusal that can be adapted for various situations in which conflicts of interest may occur. This has led to simple cases being handled by DHR. Thus, requests requiring Ethics Office advice tend to be complex, often requiring several iterations of communication with the staff members and offices.

20. In 2014, the Ethics Office continued the practice started in 2013 to categorize "allegation of wrongdoing" separately from the ethics advice category. Reports on fraudulent conduct are now mostly reported directly to OIAI, while allegations of possible harassment, including sexual harassment, are shared with the Ethics Office. The Office advises staff to first get in touch with the Ombudsman, which most do. However, some reporters hesitate to take their case forward. The Ethics Office does not have a mandate to engage directly in the resolution of employment-related grievances. It provides advice on the mechanisms available to seek redress and on entities that can support staff to address their concerns. The office has noted that often the staff members have not adequately documented incidents that give rise to their concerns. Thus, the training package now includes a concrete guide on how to document incidents of perceived harassment. Training of leaders also addresses the role of managers in fostering a respectful and harmonious workplace.

Figure II
Requests for ethics advice by subcategory, 2014



Financial Disclosure Programme

21. The Ethics Office continues to administer the Financial Disclosure Programme, the main objective of which is the management of conflicts of interest. To increase awareness of the importance of managing conflicts of interest, the Ethics Office in internal communications with staff members refers to this programme as the Conflicts of Interest and Financial Disclosure Programme (CIFDP). The programme has now reached its seventh year of operation and continues to be an important tool to foster a culture of integrity in UNICEF. As in previous years, the programme protects UNICEF against conflicts of interest and various organizational risks related to the outside activities and financial engagements of staff members.

22. In accordance with the Executive Directive of 2012 (CF/EXD/2012-003), all staff members at the D-1 level and above, and any staff member whose responsibilities are identified in the financial disclosure policy of UNICEF, are required to file a disclosure. In addition to pre-selected staff members who are required to file due to their level or functional title, additional staff members are selected in accordance with the policy, in collaboration with the Ethics Office and the head of each office during the registration of the programme. The Ethics Office

relies greatly on the individual offices for selecting additional staff members according to their level, function and apparent risk. The number of staff members participating in the programme was 2,694 in 2012 and 2,498 in 2013. A total of 2,594 staff members were selected in 2014 to participate in the Financial Disclosure Programme reporting on the period 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2013. This includes staff members at the director and representative levels who became eligible to participate after the programme launch date in March and who were sent a notification to begin filing their disclosure in September 2014.

23. By mid-July 2014, there was 99 per cent compliance by staff members who had been identified in March. Exception had been granted to 45 staff members who had separated from service, had taken extended leave or had not fit the profile and were removed from the list at the request of focal points. The remaining few were contacted by DHR for compliance. By mid-January 2015, there was also a 100 per cent compliance rate for new senior staff members who had been selected to file disclosures in September. As in previous years, the Ethics Office continues to collaborate with DHR in a system that requires senior managers to comply with the programme before the extension of their contracts as well as before being appointed to senior positions.

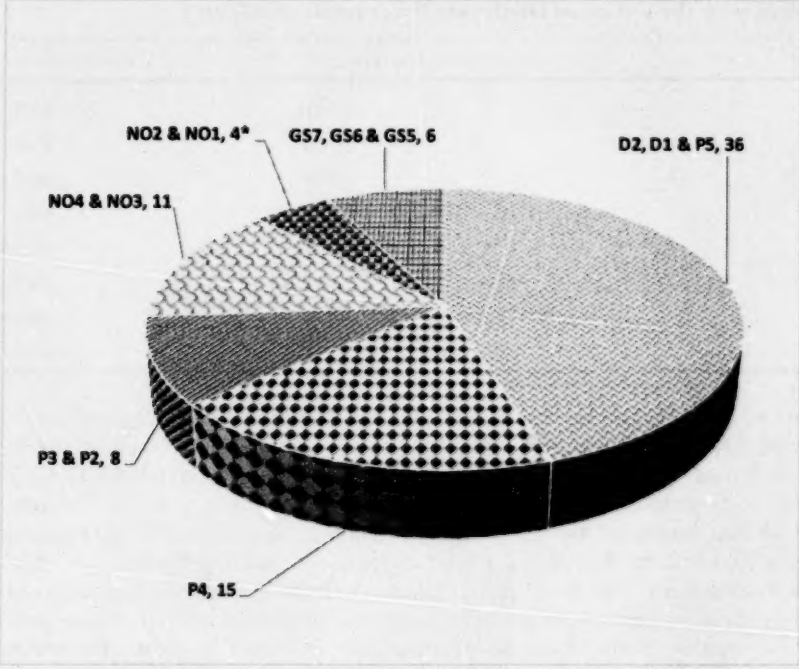
Table 3
Compliance with the Financial Disclosure Programme, 2007-2014

Year	*Number of staff required to file*	*Compliance (%)*
2007	2 545	82.8
2008	2 556	83.8
2009	2 536	100.0
2010	2 365	99.6
2011	2 592	99.7
2012	2 694	99.9
2013	2 498	100.0
2014	2 594	100.0

24. The review of the disclosures is a crucial step in understanding the conflicts of interest risk. Efforts are made to mitigate risks related to conflicts of interest and to provide staff members with guidance on how to prevent conflicts related to their professional obligations. The conflicts identified relate mainly to the outside activities of staff members. Another category of conflicts relates to staff with family members who work in the United Nations system. A small percentage of staff members have tenants who work in the United Nations system. Having received guidance in previous years, staff are more cognizant of actions needed to deal with conflicts of interest. Thus, many have proactively indicated in their disclosures appropriate mitigation measures, reducing the need for guidance notes. Overall, out of the 2,594 staff members who filed a disclosure, 171 (7 per cent) had some form of conflict of interest risk requiring a guidance note. Due to reasons mentioned above, the number of guidance notes issued was lower than in previous years.

25. The verification process is an integral part of the Financial Disclosure Programme and serves to improve the accuracy of the information disclosed by staff members. This year, the Ethics Office conducted its second verification of the disclosures. Of the filing population, slightly over 3 per cent (80 statements), diversified by location and grade, were randomly selected for verification. Figure III below shows that 44 per cent of staff members were selected at the director and P-5 levels. The staff members selected for verification were required to provide supporting documentation, including third-party documents, to validate the information they disclosed in their statements. Six staff members retired or otherwise separated during the exercise for reason not related to the exercise. They were excluded from the verification process. By 30 December 2014, the office had completed the verification of 100 per cent of the remaining selected disclosures. Sixteen participants (20 per cent) provided documents that brought to light assets that they had not previously disclosed. Along with the usual notification to file the new disclosure in 2015, these staff members will receive a customized list of assets they missed. Because full and complete disclosure is essential to maintaining ethics standards, the Office will make additional efforts to provide staff members with instructions emphasizing its importance.

Figure III
Distribution of staff verified for financial disclosure by level, 2014



* NO refers to national professionals.

Protection of staff against retaliation

26. The policy on protection against retaliation is intended to safeguard those who report misconduct from actual or threatened detrimental action. This includes those who report misconduct in good faith or who participate in duly authorized audits or investigations. A properly functioning policy on protection against retaliation is important for promoting accountability and transparency in UNICEF operational activities as well as financial and human resource management. In accordance with the Executive Board decision 2014/12, UNICEF has revised its Protection against Retaliation Policy, extending the time frame for reporting a complaint to the Ethics Office from 60 days to 6 months after the alleged act or threat of retaliation has occurred.

27. Serving as the focal point for the policy on protection against retaliation is a key part of the work of the Ethics Office. In 2014, the Ethics Office received seven requests, all from country offices, related to protection against retaliation. Two of these requests were for information. Upon sharing the policy and further discussing issues with the concerned staff members, it was clear that their cases did not involve retaliation. Advice was given on ways to address their issues. In one case, the Ethics Office shared and explained the policy and requested additional information. However, the staff member did not pursue the matter further. In another case, the office has requested further information from and continues to be in touch with the staff member. In three cases, the Ethics Office proceeded to conduct preliminary reviews, concluding that a *prima facie* case of retaliation was involved in each. In one of these cases, the office also recommended interim relief for the complainant, which was implemented. The investigation of two of the cases has been concluded and in both cases the investigation did not find evidence of retaliation. The Ethics Office reviewed the investigation report as well as background documents and agreed with the outcome of the investigation. One case is under investigation at the time of submission of this report.

28. A speak-up culture is important for an organization aiming to foster alignment of staff conduct with expected standards as well as to embrace evaluation and to consider various views and inputs before critical strategic decisions are made. Yet attaining a speak-up culture remains difficult for staff in spite of the various mechanisms of formal and informal reporting instituted by the organization, as it involves three tenets in which staff members must trust: (a) you can speak up without fear of retaliation or other negative consequences; (b) speaking up is not futile; and (c) working mechanisms to resolve questions of misconduct or other disputes are applied fairly. Thus, the Key Performance Indicator in the Strategic Plan, 2014-2017, on speak-up culture was set to be a composite indicator of these three factors in the Global Staff Survey. Four indicators measuring staff perception, two related to fear, and one each on futility and fairness were used to calculate the composite index (simple average). According to the survey of 2014, the KPI on speak-up culture is that 51 per cent of survey respondents perceive that they can speak up. The organization should strive for the KPI to reach at least 80 per cent.

Ethics Panel of the United Nations and the Ethics Network of Multilateral Organizations

29. In 2014, UNICEF participated in 10 of the 11 meetings of the Ethics Panel of the United Nations. In addition to these meetings, the members of the panel frequently consulted each other to harmonize advice and practices. This has been extremely useful in improving the quality of advice as well as in contributing to greater harmonization of both policies and interpretation of policies in practice among the participating funds and programmes. Further information on the work of panel is available in the Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Ethics Office (A/69/332) presented at the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

30. UNICEF also participates in the yearly meeting of the Ethics Network of Multilateral Organizations. The meeting is an excellent forum in which to exchange materials and to learn and develop best practices. In 2014, the meeting focused on issues of ethics issues arising from use of social media, whistle-blower protection and prevention of retaliation, ethics office collaboration with other internal stakeholders and enabling staff to give voice to values. The Principal Advisor on Ethics participated as a panel member in the session on ethics office collaboration with internal stakeholders.

Recommendations to management

31. The first paragraph of the Strategic Plan, 2014-2017, states that the fundamental mission of UNICEF is to promote the rights of every child, everywhere, in everything the organization does — in programmes, in advocacy and in operations. The focus on equity, emphasizing the most disadvantaged and excluded children and their families, further translates into action this commitment to children's rights. For UNICEF, equity means that all children have an opportunity to survive, develop and reach their full potential, without discrimination, bias or favouritism.

32. Ethical behaviour and decision-making are critical for UNICEF in fulfilling its mission. In the 2014-2017 strategic plan for the Ethics Office, three major objectives were set forth: raising awareness of the importance of ethics and the standards of conduct among UNICEF staff members, improving the understanding of conflicts of interest, and fostering a speak-up culture.

33. In the 2014 Global Staff Survey, 92 per cent of respondents stated that they understand the standards of conduct expected of them, and 83 per cent stated that they know what to do if they witness unethical behaviour or misconduct in UNICEF. This is very encouraging. To continue this trend, the Ethics Office recommends that the new e-learning programme be made mandatory for all staff members and be included in the induction programme for new staff members.

34. The Financial Disclosure Programme and overall awareness-raising has improved the understanding of conflicts of interest. However, queries shared with the Ethics Office during and after training sessions and ethics dialogue sessions indicate that there is continued need for improvement. DHR and the Ethics Office have also noted an increasing number of requests for advice on how to manage potential conflicts of interests of newly recruited staff members, such as being on special leave status from a previous employer. The Ethics Office recommends that a

system be introduced to allow new staff, as part of the recruitment process, to disclose and proactively manage possible conflicts of interest.

35. The 2013 Standards of Conduct of the International Civil Service has a new section on post-employment restrictions. UNICEF at headquarters level is increasingly using the United Nations Global Marketplace UNGM portal to request proposals for large-scale contracts. For these contracts, post-employment restrictions in line with the Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/2006/15 on the subject are in place. However, for other contracts this is not as clear. The Ethics Office recommends that UNICEF adopt post-employment restrictions in line with ST/SGB/2006/15 for contracts for goods and services as well as for Programme Cooperation Agreements. This would also help the staff to better understand appropriate conduct vis-à-vis current and prospective contractors and grantee partners.

36. Speak-up culture enables the organization to address unethical conduct early enough so that it does not become an organizational risk. Its benefits, however, go further, as speak-up culture also helps to enhance open dialogue on innovative and strategic issues. To help to foster such a culture, the Ethics Office urges management to consider how to further implement policies in an open and fair manner, improve the implementation of existing policies in term of procedural fairness, to continue its efforts to improve leadership and managerial capacity at all levels to proactively address issues brought up by staff members, and to institute tools, such as 360 performance evaluation, to bring about accountability towards fostering speak-up culture.

37. The Ethics Office is committed to cultivating and nurturing a culture of ethics, integrity and accountability in UNICEF. Towards this end, it will continue to collaborate with all offices and divisions, the staff association, Ethics offices in the United Nations and other stakeholders to foster ethical organizational culture.

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Annual report for 2014 on the evaluation function in UNICEF

Summary

In accordance with Executive Board decisions 2014/10, 2013/13, and 2012/12, the present report provides an overview of the status of the evaluation function of UNICEF in 2014 and reports on progress in implementing the revised evaluation policy.

A draft decision is included in section IX.

* E/ICEF/2015/4.

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I. Introduction

1. At its annual session of 2013, in decision 2013/13, the Executive Board approved the revised evaluation policy of UNICEF (E/ICEF/2013/14), which reaffirmed "the organization's commitment to demonstrate results, transparency and accountability through an independent and credible evaluation system, [which] supports the mission, mandate and strategic priorities of UNICEF".[1] A robust evaluation function supports organizational learning and accountability and thereby helps UNICEF to document and constantly improve its performance and results.

2. The present report provides an overview of the status of the evaluation function at UNICEF in 2014 and reports on progress in implementing the revised evaluation policy. It considers the governance of the function, outlines UNICEF efforts to promote evaluation coherence within the United Nations system and more widely and reports on the performance and results of the function across UNICEF. It also covers action taken to respond to decisions of the Executive Board and reviews the utilization of evaluation evidence in UNICEF.

II. Governance of the evaluation function

3. The Executive Board exercises oversight of the evaluation function in UNICEF, upholding its central role in UNICEF.

4. At its annual session of 2014, Executive Board members considered the annual report for 2013 on the evaluation function, submitted by the Evaluation Office. For the first time, at the request of the Executive Board in its decision 2013/13, the annual report was accompanied by a paper prepared by management setting out the management perspective on the material presented in the annual report.

5. At its first regular session of 2014, the Executive Board also welcomed the Plan for Global Thematic Evaluations, 2014-2017 (E/ICEF/2014/3). An update on implementation of the plan, as requested by the Executive Board in its decision 2014/10, is provided in section V. Three global thematic evaluations were considered by the Executive Board in the course of the year, addressing, in turn, community management of acute malnutrition, the UNICEF cluster lead agency role in humanitarian action, and UNICEF support for protection of children in emergencies. A thematic evaluation synthesis report drawing together learning from evaluations of nutrition programmes was also considered. Each report was supplemented by a formal management response.

6. The internal UNICEF Evaluation Committee met in September, when it endorsed Standard Operating Procedures intended to clarify responsibilities for responding to global thematic evaluation reports; provided guidance on the preparation of an action plan to strengthen the evaluation function in UNICEF; and took note of levels of expenditure on evaluation, as recorded in VISION.

7. The external Audit Advisory Committee keeps the evaluation function in view, considering evaluation to be an important organizational control. In its report to the Executive Board,[2] the Committee recorded its satisfaction with measures to

[1] E/ICEF/2013/14.

[2] UNICEF Audit Advisory Committee, 2013 annual report (28 February 2014).

strengthen the independence of the Evaluation Office introduced in the revised evaluation policy.

8. The UNICEF evaluation function was reviewed in 2014 by the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), as part of a review of evaluation functions across the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2014/6). The favourable review found the UNICEF evaluation function to be well developed, while noting some areas for improvement (see section V).

III. Evaluation coherence within the United Nations system

A. Decisions of the United Nations General Assembly

9. In recent years, evaluation has received increased attention from United Nations Member States. The United Nations General Assembly resolution on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review (QCPR)[3] emphasized the importance of evaluation and the use of evaluation evidence, and called for effective arrangements for independent system-wide evaluation (ISWE). To guide efforts on ISWE, an Interim Coordination Mechanism was set up and a policy on ISWE was adopted.[4] Terms of Reference for two pilot evaluations have been developed and efforts made to mobilize resources, with a view to undertaking the evaluations in 2015. Throughout, UNICEF has provided advice and assistance in support of the initiative.

10. In December 2014, for the first time, the General Assembly approved a resolution specifically on evaluation. Resolution 69/237 invites United Nations entities "to support, upon request, efforts to further strengthen the capacity of Member States for evaluation in accordance with their national policies and priorities".[5] Activities will be reported in 2016 within the Secretary-General's progress report on the QCPR.

B. United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG)

11. UNEG is a professional network comprising the evaluation units of organizations across the United Nations system. It has supported system-wide evaluation coherence by developing common norms and standards for use across the United Nations, as well as developing and sharing tools and guidance. In 2013, UNEG adopted a new strategy with a stronger emphasis on advocacy and outreach, including closer engagement with the Evaluation Network of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Evaluation Coordination Group of the international development banks.[6] This shift in orientation was reflected in the Evaluation Week held in Bangkok in March 2014, organized jointly by UNEG and a regional evaluation network, the United Nations Evaluation Development Group for Asia and

[3] A/RES/67/226 of 21 December 2012.

[4] Policy for Independent System-wide Evaluation of Operational Activities for Development of the United Nations System (14 June 2013). See: A/68/658-E/2014/7.

[5] General Assembly resolution 69/237 of 19 December 2014, on building capacity for the evaluation of development activities at the country level.

[6] UNEG Strategy, 2014-2019.

the Pacific. Activities during the week brought together senior United Nations officials, diplomats, academics and parliamentarians from the region for discussions on evaluation issues. UNICEF played a major role through its East Asia and Pacific Regional Office in arranging and hosting the Evaluation Week, and provided substantive input to the Evaluation Practice Exchange among UNEG evaluation professionals.

12. UNEG also convened several seminars and side events held in New York and supported the process leading to adoption of the General Assembly resolution on evaluation capacity-building noted above. UNEG is also a member of the ISWE Interim Coordination Mechanism.

13. Peer reviews can be a powerful mechanism for promoting adherence to agreed norms and standards. In recent years, UNEG has undertaken a series of peer reviews among its members, with support from the Evaluation Network of the Development Assistance Committee.[7] The Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP) invited UNEG to undertake such a peer review. Chaired by the Director of the UNICEF Evaluation Office, the peer review was begun in 2013 and successfully completed in 2014 with the presentation to the WFP Executive Board of the final report and the formal WFP management response.

14. Overall, UNEG is an important channel for enhancing the coherence of evaluation across the United Nations. Recognizing this, UNICEF continues to support UNEG and lead various activities.

C. Joint evaluations

15. Joint evaluations provide a practical vehicle for considering system-wide issues and aligning evaluation practices. The Evaluation Office engaged in several joint evaluation activities in 2014:

(a) **Joint Evaluation of Joint Programmes on Gender Equality in the United Nations System:** At their annual sessions of 2014, Members of the Executive Boards of the respective agencies were briefed on the results of this evaluation and on the joint management response prepared by the agencies. As noted in the annual report for 2013 on the evaluation function (E/ICEF/2014/12), the evaluation has yielded valuable lessons to improve the design and implementation of future joint gender programmes;

(b) **Inter-agency Evaluation of the United Nations response to Typhoon Haiyan:** The Inter-agency Humanitarian Evaluation Group undertakes joint evaluations of the United Nations response to humanitarian emergencies. The joint evaluation of the Typhoon Haiyan emergency response found that the initial inter-agency efforts were relevant and timely and contributed effectively towards meeting emergency needs, while noting that communities were dissatisfied with the beneficiary targeting systems used by agencies.[8] The report recognized the key role of the Government of the Philippines, with its established and experienced national

[7] The Development Assistance Committee is a committee of members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

[8] Valid International (October 2014) *Interagency Humanitarian Evaluation of the Typhoon Haiyan Response*. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) is coordinating preparation of a formal management response.

disaster-management system as well as the important self-help role played by the Filipino people themselves in the affected areas;

(c) **Crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic and neighbouring countries (Syrian crisis):** The Inter-agency Humanitarian Evaluation group also organized an initiative to share information from evaluations of the humanitarian response to the Syrian crisis.[9] A web portal was established and a briefing paper commissioned to promote understanding of the subregional context and guide evaluation efforts.[10]

16. Several joint evaluations are planned for 2015, notably inter-agency evaluations of the United Nations response to emergencies in the Central African Republic and South Sudan, as well as an inter-agency evaluation on nutrition (see annex).

IV. UNICEF support to evaluation coherence and collaboration at the global level

17. UNICEF continued to assist with the governance and coordination of EvalPartners, a rapidly growing network of national, regional and global evaluation associations and other partners, which is building up an impressive track record of support for various activities related to national evaluation capacity development.

18. UNICEF also engaged closely with ALNAP, a network supporting learning from evaluations and other efforts to strengthen humanitarian action. A key activity has been the development of an e-learning programme on how to undertake evaluation of humanitarian action, which was launched early in 2015.

19. At the suggestion of its members, EvalPartners launched efforts to declare 2015 an International Year of Evaluation, to be marked by a series of events around the globe promoting evaluation and the use of evaluation evidence to inform decision-making. For example, UNEG plans to hold an Evaluation Week in New York, featuring a high-level forum. General Assembly resolution 69/237, on evaluation, recognized the International Year of Evaluation as an opportunity to mobilize support for national evaluation capacity development.

V. The evaluation function in UNICEF: performance and results

Introduction

20. This section (a) reports on the findings from the review by the JIU on the status of the evaluation function across the United Nations system, and (b) provides an analysis of key performance data from internal UNICEF sources.

[9] This initiative has been undertaken jointly with the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP), whose members come from a wide range of agencies involved in humanitarian action, including United Nations agencies.

[10] See Slim, H. and Trombetta, L. (2014), *Syria Common Context Analysis. Coordinated Accountability and Lessons learning (CALL) Initiative*. IASC Inter-agency Humanitarian Evaluation Steering Group.

A. JIU analysis of the evaluation function in the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2014/6)

21. The JIU 2014 analysis was intended to support the professionalization of the evaluation function, address emerging challenges and contribute to strengthening the United Nations system.[11]

22. The study assessed 28 organizations, focusing mainly on the central evaluation function while also reviewing the decentralized function where relevant. Using a well-developed analytical framework, the study considered: (a) the enabling environment; (b) independence and credibility; (c) quality; (d) utility; and (e) relevance.

23. The study categorized organizations into four clusters in terms of their maturity. UNICEF falls within Cluster I, where most of the expected systems and policies supporting the central evaluation function are in place and well institutionalized. The other Cluster 1 organizations are the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), International Labour Organization, WFP, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), United Nations Industrial Development Organization, United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. The main challenge for these organizations, which are mainly relatively large entities, is to strengthen the use and impact of evaluation products and manage the increasing demands on the function.

24. Regarding decentralized evaluation, UNICEF, along with UNDP, UNFPA and UN-Women, was found to have pertinent standards, guidance and operational procedures for decentralized evaluations as well as systems for quality assurance and tracking of implementation.

25. The JIU review concluded that the evaluation function needs to be strengthened across all United Nations agencies, especially regarding the use of evaluation evidence. However, it found that UNICEF has a mature and high-performing evaluation function that is well supported at decentralized levels. UNICEF is one of only three agencies actively supporting national evaluation capacity development. This confirms the generally positive profile presented in recent UNICEF annual reports on the evaluation function, while serving as a reminder that further improvement is needed.

B. The evaluation function in UNICEF: key performance information and analysis

26. The information reported in this section mainly derives from the Global Evaluation Reports Oversight System (GEROS). This system provides for independent assessment and rating of reports on country, regional and global evaluations; feedback on the quality of reports to offices; and compilation of performance information into a management information dashboard. GEROS quality ratings are based on careful, systematic assessments made by external reviewers using criteria based on UNEG standards.

[11] Analysis of the Evaluation Function in the United Nations System, 2014, p. iii.

27. GEROS now functions well, and the Evaluation Office continues to update and strengthen it. In 2014, provision was made for easier updating of certain information, and the database within the system was expanded to cover research reports. It is anticipated that the database will grow further to include all studies as it transitions to a comprehensive repository of all major sources of evidence, except for statistical data, which is managed separately.

28. Further innovations may be noted:

(a) In June 2014, UNICEF launched live, real-time monitoring of many of the variables referenced in the present report. This allows more proactive management of issues;

(b) A software platform used in the planning phase for all research, studies, and evaluations was piloted, and will enable greater quality assurance oversight earlier in the process by regional offices and others. This system will expand to several regions in 2015;

(c) The initiation of costed evaluation plans as part of country programme submissions to the Executive Board will likewise allow more proactive quality assurance and transparency;

(d) Finally, UNICEF is preparing to conduct a review of the GEROS system in 2015. After five years of implementation, a review may identify changes for greater speed, accuracy, quality, and use.

C. Overview

29. A suite of seven key performance indicators (KPIs) provides a general overview of performance in 2014, supplemented by trend information from previous years. Four major conclusions are warranted:

(a) Evaluation quality continued the move first seen in 2013 towards a sustained high percentage of good/excellent evaluations. These quality improvements have occurred together with continued high performance in focusing on higher-level results, and in the preparation of management responses;

(b) UNICEF routinely monitors certain elements of evaluation practice, namely, the appropriate consideration in evaluation reports of human rights, gender and equity issues; of engagement of stakeholders in ways suited to their capacities and interests; and of ethical issues. Over the past several years, evaluation performance in these areas has been weak. It remains to be determined whether this represents reporting deficits or reflects deficiencies in actual practice;

(c) Budget use can now be tracked through VISION. For 2014, the data show that UNICEF commits 0.5 per cent of its programming funds to evaluation, compared to the 1 per cent called for in the evaluation policy. This is a welcome increase compared to the level of 0.33 per cent recorded in 2011;

(d) The execution of the 2014-2017 plan for global thematic evaluations commissioned by the Evaluation Office has started slowly.

D. Performance against key performance indicators

Indicator 1: Number of evaluations managed and submitted to the global evaluation database

30. In 2013, UNICEF offices completed and submitted 96 evaluations, the number having risen significantly from the 79 submitted in 2012. In this as in other KPIs, the data refer to evaluations completed and submitted in 2013 as the most recent year for which data and analysis are available. Evaluations are generally submitted after the year end, and the analysis of evaluations completed in 2014 is not available for this report.

31. The Executive Board has asked for more information on coverage (decision 2014/10). Globally, 75 per cent of countries have completed at least one evaluation in the past three years. In 2013, productivity by region varied from a low of 4 evaluations submitted in one region to as many as 25 in another. UNICEF is currently considering how best to set expectations for evaluation coverage and numbers, taking account of variations in regional contexts and using the criteria set out in the revised evaluation policy, i.e., programme expenditure, scaling up, humanitarian context, and recent evaluation activity. Some KPIs described below expand on additional aspects of coverage. A deeper analysis of overall and regional productivity will inform future reports.

Indicator 2: Topical distribution

32. For 2013, a breakdown shows that, over four years, the percentage of evaluations dealing with just a single sector can vary widely, compared with other topical emphases such as multisectoral evaluations (table 1). The new and notable growth in the relative volume of evaluations on child survival and development is almost entirely due to a recent major expansion in evaluations on nutrition. Growth in one area is matched by a simultaneous decline in others, most notably in education in recent years. While this may reflect a limit on how many evaluations each office can do, it also shows a welcome flexibility in terms of redirecting limited evaluation resources to themes of growing interest, such as nutrition, to which the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) initiative and other programmes have drawn attention in recent years.

Table 1
Topical distribution of evaluation reports, 2010-2013, by percentage

Topic	*2010 (baseline)*	*2011*	*2012**	*2013*
Sector specific (by key results area of the UNICEF medium-term strategic plan)	66	55	41	59
Child survival and development (health, nutrition, and water, sanitation and hygiene [WASH])	*25*	*13*	*26*	*31*
Education and gender	*15*	*25*	*13*	*11*
Child protection	*15*	*10*	*8*	*11*
HIV/AIDS	*10*	*4*	*5*	*3*
Policy advocacy and partnerships	*1*	*4*	*1*	*1*

Topic	2010 (baseline)	2011	2012*	2013
Programmes covering several sectors	34	25	43	28
Cross-cutting themes	–	20	10	10
Organizational performance	–	–	6	3

Source: GEROS reports, 2011-2014.

* This 2012 data was erroneously reported as 2013 data in the 2014 report to the Executive Board. This column now represents the correct year and figures. Similar errors in two other KPIs have also been rectified in this report.

Indicator 3: Types of evaluations conducted

33. The percentage of evaluations looking primarily at the output level continues to decline, as desired. Evaluations should focus on higher-level, more complex results. Output-level concerns should be served by monitoring and review processes.

34. The percentage of formative evaluations — those conducted early in the programme cycle to assess whether implementation is unfolding satisfactorily — continued the sharp decline first noted for 2012 (table 2). This suggests that multidimensional and real-time programme monitoring is beginning to provide much richer data for managers than conventional programme monitoring, thereby reducing the demand for formative and output-level evaluations.

Table 2
Types of evaluations conducted, by percentage, 2009-2012

	2009	2011	2012	2013
*By programmatic results level examined**				
Output-level evaluations	33	27	18	8
Outcome-level evaluations	24	46	30	65
Impact-level evaluations	43	27	52	27
*By managerial intent**				
Formative-level evaluations	45	59	24	29
Summative-level evaluations	55	41	76	71

* Summative evaluations normally also have some formative elements as well, and impact-level evaluations may also look at output-level issues. This table records solely their primary purpose.

Indicator 4: Quality of UNICEF evaluations

35. Of all the key performance indicators, the quality ratings have been the most variable from year to year (table 3). The 2013 data show two welcome movements: to the highest-ever level of satisfactory/excellent ratings; and to the lowest level of poor ratings. This is the second consecutive year of excellent results and, if it persists for another year, UNICEF can be confident that this improvement is sustainable. Progress may be attributable to the gradual absorption of advice provided to staff and to increased attention to evaluation by managers.

Table 3
Quality of completed evaluations, by percentage, 2009-2013

	2009	*2011*	*2012*	*2013*
Quality rating				
Confident to act (*good* or *excellent*)	36	42	62	69
Almost confident to act (*almost satisfactory*)[12]	34	35	30	29
Poor	30	23	8	2

36. The overall quality rating is a synthesis of many specific ratings (table 4). Several of these indicate the extent of mainstreaming of corporate commitments. Regarding the engagement of all stakeholders in ways suited to their capacities and interests, a negative pattern is appearing: the percentage is regressing toward the 2010 baseline from the highest rate attained in 2011.

37. Another important area concerns gender equality. In 2012, the United Nations adopted a System-wide Action Plan (SWAP) on gender equality and the empowerment of women, comprising a set of standards by which to measure gender integration and mainstreaming in the work of the United Nations system. The new policy tasked United Nations agencies to consider six distinct elements in the promotion of gender and empowerment, of which evaluation was one. In 2014, UNICEF assessed its 2013 evaluations using the SWAP standards, aiming at compliance with the system-wide gender mainstreaming standards. The results were used to report to the Economic and Social Council on the extent to which gender is mainstreamed in UNICEF evaluations, as well as to help to identify key areas for improvement in years to come. This first cycle of SWAP analyses marked an important step in measuring commitment to gender equality in programming and evaluation within UNICEF and more widely across the United Nations system. Overall, UNICEF was scored as "approaching requirements": 60 per cent of evaluations were rated as "approaching requirements", 35 per cent as "missing the requirements" and only 5 per cent as "meeting the requirements" of the SWAP.

38. Taking human rights, gender and equity concerns together, the GEROS ratings provide an indication of a positive trend, but there is clearly much room for improvement.

[12] "Almost confident to act" is selected when the report content appears to be accurate and the evaluation was correctly managed, but there is some shortcoming that prevents having full confidence. The problem is often under-description in the report, or a weakness in a small portion of the effort within a generally good larger approach.

Table 4
Mainstreaming of selected corporate emphases in completed evaluations, 2010-2012

*Corporate emphasis**	*Percentage of reports attaining a "good" or "excellent" rating*			
	2010	*2011*	*2012*	*2013***
Appropriate incorporation of human rights, gender and equity concerns	18	33	44	47
Engagement of all stakeholders in ways suited to their capacities and interests	40	52	48	42
Ethical issues and considerations described, and the appropriate ethical safeguards, described	10	22	32	38

* Drawn from among the elements analysed in each report, based on the UNEG quality standards for evaluations.
** 2013 data is from GEROS report table 5.25.

39. Ethics is an important consideration in evaluation. For the first time, this report notes the ratings for ethics, as assessed through GEROS. The findings reveal that the majority (62 per cent) of the reports completed in 2013 did not address ethics at all or did so only superficially. While this marks an improvement from 2010, when 82 per cent of reports made no reference to ethics, further efforts are required in this area. UNICEF has now issued a formal Procedure on Research Ethics, which is expected to guide attention to ethical considerations in evaluation and research.

Indicator 5: Use of evaluation, including management responses

40. Evaluation is an investment. As evaluation quality has improved, there is every reason to capitalize on time and funds invested in evaluation by making effective use of the results. The UNICEF evaluation policy requires a formal management response for each evaluation, translating evaluation recommendations into agreed actions.

41. Management responses are required to be submitted to a corporate database. The submission rate reached 92 per cent in 2013 from the 2009 baseline of 10 per cent. Advocacy, training and oversight have together resulted in rapid improvements. Implementation of agreed actions (including actions completed and ongoing) increased from 57 per cent in 2010 to consistently around 80 per cent. Further efforts will be made to prompt compliance where implementation of agreed actions are lagging. A study looking at all aspects of the management response mechanism and the use of evaluations is under preparation.

Indicator 6: Corporate spending on evaluation

42. Corporate spending on evaluation was a KPI through 2011, when a changeover in UNICEF internal systems led to data becoming non-comparable. A further systems change was introduced with the Strategic Plan, 2014-2017, allowing reporting on this KPI, as requested by the Executive Board in its decision 2013/13.

43. The 2014 data show that a total of $18.7 million dollars was spent or committed to evaluation by end-December 2014, within a corporate programming budget of $4.1 billion. In other words, 0.5 per cent of the UNICEF programme budget expenditures were devoted to evaluation. The Latin American and Caribbean region was the regional leader, at 1.4 per cent. The expenditure level of 0.5 per cent of programme expenditure is a 50 per cent increase from the level recorded in 2007-2010 (annual average of 0.33 per cent). However, the revised evaluation policy sets the figure of 1 per cent as the minimum level for spending on evaluation as a percentage of programme expenditure. By this policy norm, UNICEF is under-spending programme resources on evaluation. Given that offices have had only a short time to adjust their plans in the light of the new policy, the 2014 data can be considered to indicate a positive start.

Indicator 7: Corporate-level evaluations[13]

44. The schedule of corporate-level evaluations to be managed by the Evaluation Office is presented to the Executive Board prior to the start of the UNCEF strategic plan for that period, and is revised on a rolling basis to account for emerging priorities. The 2104-2017 Plan for Global Thematic Evaluations is closely aligned with the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014-2017.

45. Table 5 shows implementation of corporate evaluations over the 2012-2013 biennium, and in the first two years of the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan. Further details of implementation appear in the annex, and a summary of results is available on the evaluation web pages of the UNICEF website, along with the completed evaluations.[14]

Table 5
Implementation of corporate evaluations: status at 31 December 2014

	2012-2013		*2014-2015*	
Plan status	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*
Scheduled	14	–	12	–
Completed	7	50	0	0
Under implementation	0	0	6	50
Pending	0	0	5	42
Rescheduled*	6	43	0	0
Cancelled/modified	1	7	1	8

* All items rescheduled from 2012-2013 have been placed into the 2014-2017 evaluation plan.

46. Evaluations carried forward from the 2012-2013 corporate evaluation plan and completed in 2014 were on the following subjects:

(a) Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys;

[13] Corporate-level evaluations for present purposes are those commissioned and managed by the Evaluation Office.

[14] www.unicef.org/evaluation.

(b) Formative evaluation of the Monitoring Results for Equity System (MoRES), including seven country case studies;

(c) Cluster lead agency role in humanitarian action;

(d) Child protection in emergencies, including four country case studies;

(e) Community approaches to total sanitation;

(f) Emergency preparedness systems;

(g) Upstream work in the education sector, including four country case studies.

47. The real-time evaluation of the UNICEF response to the Typhoon Haiyan emergency in the Philippines was completed in 2014, as noted above. Preparatory work was also undertaken for evaluation of the UNICEF response to other major emergencies, including the Syrian crisis (for which a scoping visit was completed) and in the Central African Republic (where an evaluation was launched at the beginning of 2015). Given the unpredictability of humanitarian emergencies, the plan for global thematic evaluations for 2014-2017 did not list evaluations of specific emergencies. Nonetheless, the unexpected increase in the number and scale of major humanitarian emergencies over the past two years has demanded significantly increased evaluation effort.

48. In addition, several joint evaluations were completed (see section III above), and preparations have been made for inter-agency evaluations to be undertaken in the Central African Republic and South Sudan in 2015.

49. Several evaluations from the 2014-2017 corporate evaluation plan were launched but not yet completed by the end of 2014, including evaluations on violence against children, on the evaluability of the Strategic Plan and on education and peacebuilding. Methodological work on innovation was also initiated. The evaluation synthesis study on nutrition was completed and presented to the Executive Board at its second regular session of 2014.

50. Corporate evaluation plans have been ambitious. Although completed evaluations are generally rated as being relevant and of high quality, delivery has generally been behind schedule, constrained by the complexity and scale of some evaluations. For example, the MoRES evaluation included preparation of seven detailed country case studies in addition to the main report. Furthermore, new or complex areas of work have required careful scoping. For example, an in-depth scoping exercise was undertaken to prepare for the upstream education evaluation. The adoption of simpler or less extensive evaluation designs will help to accelerate delivery.

51. Staffing gaps in 2014 also led to delays, notably regarding evaluation of humanitarian interventions. Steps have been taken to bolster staffing in the Evaluation Office in 2015. A Senior Evaluation Specialist covering humanitarian action was recruited in 2014; an evaluation specialist covering the water sector was appointed; and several temporary appointments will strengthen the capacity of the office to address subject areas, including health, HIV/AIDS and early childhood development.

52. The annex provides a list of the topics for 2015. While this is an ambitious agenda, increased staffing is expected to enable more timely delivery.

VI. Response to Executive Board guidance on evaluation

53. The annual report on the evaluation function periodically provides data on requests made by the Executive Board, including through decisions and their implementation. For the first time, in the present report, a comprehensive overview is provided of decisions and actions taken from 2011 to 2013 (table 6). Other Executive Board comments such as "notes" or "encourages" are not included, as it is understood that only 'requests' establish an expectation of action.

54. Themes recur from year to year, and this section groups similar Executive Board requests into five categories. Against each request, a status note is offered, using the following key:

(a) Completed: All follow-up actions concluded; no additional effort needed

(b) Developed/sustained: Response successfully developed; efforts are ongoing to sustain the success

(c) Underway: Action is being taken to respond to the request, and no obstacles have emerged

(d) Pending: Planning is underway, but implementation has not yet begun

(e) Constrained: Obstacles have so far held back action.

Table 6

Theme: Independence, governance, and strategic vision of the evaluation function			
Short title	**Executive Board request**	**Decision and para. Number**	**Status at December 2014**
Board Dialogue	A dialogue between the Executive Board and UNICEF on the independence of the Evaluation Office, including budget arrangements	2011/20:10	Completed
Review the function	Review of the evaluation function and evaluation policy	2012/12:8a	Completed
Updated policy	Present an updated evaluation policy to the Board in 2013	2012/12:8a	Completed
Resource allocation	UNICEF to allocate sufficient resources to the Evaluation Office in a separate budget line in the UNICEF integrated budget, 2014-2017	2013/13:11	Developed/ Sustained
Expenditure-tracking	UNICEF to track expenditure for decentralized evaluations	2013/13:12	Developed/ Sustained

55. UNICEF has completed all the actions requested, and UNICEF management has met several times with Executive Board representatives on these issues. At its

annual session of 2013, the Executive Board reviewed and approved the revised evaluation policy, which drew on comments from several reviews by the Executive Board. The 2014-2017 budget of the Evaluation Office doubled the core resources available, and Evaluation is now a function that receives priority attention when thematic funds are allocated. Finally, the present report on 2014 includes the expenditure-tracking information following a redesign of the UNICEF financial coding system.

Table 7

Theme: Humanitarian evaluations			
Short title	**Executive Board request**	**Decision and para. number**	**Status at December 2014**
Humanitarian coverage	Address 'key gaps' in the evaluation coverage of humanitarian interventions	2013/13:12	Underway
Evaluation quality	Continue to improve the quality of evaluations in the humanitarian field	2013/13:19	Underway

56. The Executive Board made these requests at its annual session in June 2013, following its consideration of the thematic synthesis report on evaluation of humanitarian action. UNICEF actions in response are underway. Additional capacity has been hired within the Evaluation Office to increase humanitarian coverage, and clearer rules now guide evaluation efforts in major emergencies. Training and support for evaluation of lesser emergencies where the evaluation duties remain with the field offices were prepared in 2014 for roll-out in 2015, linked to an e-training programme for evaluation in emergencies. The results of these efforts on quality and coverage should be clearer in 2016 and 2017.

Table 8

Theme: Coordination with national partners; capacity building of partners			
Short Title	**Executive Board request**	**Decision and para. number**	**Status at December 2014**
Government consultation	Conduct evaluations at the country level in close consultation with government and other national partners	2013/13:13	Underway
National capacities	As appropriate, assist governments and partners in the development of national evaluation capacities	2013/13:13	Underway

57. UNICEF has usually conducted evaluations in close consultation with national stakeholders, and will continue to do so.

58. Concerning building capacity for national evaluation, UNICEF is a major actor, as described in depth in previous annual reports. UNICEF works in this field with partners, such as the EvalPartners global network and other United Nations agencies. In 2014, this theme achieved much higher visibility through General Assembly resolution 69/237. UNICEF stands ready to receive requests for assistance in this area from national partners and will work jointly with other United Nations agencies in support of this resolution. UNICEF is also supporting sector specific-strategies, such as that for WASH whereby UNICEF and the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom are strengthening national WASH monitoring and evaluation capacity as an element of their joint efforts.

Table 9

Theme: management responses and utilization			
Short title	**Executive Board request**	**Decision and para. number**	**Status at December 2014**
Coverage	Ensure management responses are prepared to address all evaluation recommendations	2011/20:8a 2012/12:7	Developed/sustained
Implementation	Ensure implementation of agreed actions	2011/20/:8a	Constrained
Usage	Ensure that relevant results are systematically considered and used in preparing key policies, strategies, and programmes	2011/20:8c 2012/12:8c	Underway
Timeliness	Ensure the timeliness of management responses	2013/13:12	Underway

59. As noted in the KPIs, most UNICEF evaluations are matched by a management response, and the great majority of agreed actions are begun. Recently, Standard Operating Procedures for global thematic evaluations have been issued to clarify roles and responsibilities in the concluding stages of an evaluation.

60. Nonetheless, experience in the field indicates that some complexities remain, including the following:

(a) The need to improve the clarity and quality of evaluation recommendations;

(b) The need to prioritize recommendations when an overly long list of them is presented;

(c) Mobilizing managers to implement agreed recommendations;

(d) Extracting lessons from a broad range of evaluations in a timely way to influence policy and programme design and implementation;

(e) Coordinating management responses with review moments and advocacy opportunities.

61. UNICEF is well aware of the importance of management responses, and will continue to strengthen guidance and support, to monitor progress and to report the relevant data.

Table 10

Theme: Reporting to the Executive Board			
Short title	**Executive Board request**	**Decision and para. number**	**Status at December 2014**
Management responses	Report on progress in the implementation of management responses including how they help UNICEF offices to report more transparently to partners and host governments	2011/20:8(b) 2012/12:7	Pending
Respond to thematic analysis	Prepare a succinct management response to the thematic analysis section of the annual report on the evaluation function	2011/20:9	Developed/ sustained
Two annual reports	Prepare from 2013 onwards two reports to the Board, on (a) the performance of the function, and (b) lessons on a substantive theme containing findings and their use	2012/12:8b	Developed/ sustained
Management perspective	UNICEF [management] present a written statement with a management perspective on issues raised in the annual report	2013/13:10	Developed/ sustained
Using results	Report on steps taken to ensure relevant results are systematically considered and used in preparing key policies, strategies, and programmes	2013/13:18	Pending
Policy implementation	Report in 2015 on steps taken to implement the revised evaluation policy	2014/10:9	Completed
Thematic evaluations	Report in 2015 on the implementation of the plan for global thematic evaluations 2014-2017	2014/10:9 2014/10:11	Completed
Evaluation coverage	Annually provide an overview of evaluation coverage including coverage by region, theme, and programme expenditure level	2014/10:10	Underway

62. UNICEF has completed the majority of the requested actions, enabling the Executive Board to have ever deeper insights into the evaluation function and, more importantly, into aspects of UNICEF performance. Each year, the Executive Board now receives both a performance report on the evaluation function and a substantive thematic report, with a management perspective and a management response, respectively, on each. The present report gives information on the implementation of the plan for global thematic evaluations and on steps taken to implement the revised evaluation policy. Guidance on evaluation coverage is in preparation, in particular on how to meet policy requirements and on monitoring and reporting. Information on the use of evaluation results in policy, programme design and implementation,

and reporting to governments has been provided anecdotally. However, means are being sought to do this systematically so that an accurate organization-wide portrait can be presented.

63. In summary, UNICEF has been attentive in responding to direction from the Executive Board. Where issues are unresolved, they reflect difficulties in monitoring and measuring, or in assigning action. UNICEF continues to work on these issues and will update the Executive Board on additional developments in future, as well as on actions taken following decisions adopted in 2015 and beyond.

VII. Utilization

64. The Executive Board requested, in paragraph 15 of decision 2013/13, that UNICEF report on steps taken to ensure that relevant results are systematically considered and used in preparing key policies, strategies, and programmes. While there is no comprehensive action plan in place, evaluation utilization has been the subject of considerable reflection in recent years. This section presents preliminary data and analysis as the groundwork for further improvements in evaluation dissemination and usage.

65. In 2012, an indicative baseline was calculated of evaluation usage, based on statements made in the 2011 country office annual reports. The 172 examples given of usage were clustered as follows:

(a) Evidence-based advocacy: 25 per cent;

(b) Development/revision of national policies and programmes: 23 per cent;

(c) Development/revision of country programme strategies and interventions: 15 per cent;

(d) Assessing new/revised interventions and services: 12 per cent;

(e) Scaling up/replication and expansion: 10 per cent;

(f) Action plans: 10 per cent;

(g) Leveraging resources: 5 per cent.

66. Interestingly, 48 per cent of the utilization examples reported were on a scale much wider than the management of the specific UNICEF-supported programmes that had been evaluated. Reported uses targeted broad national policies or legislative, fiscal, and political action. This indicates intelligent efforts to blend evaluation evidence into broader strategic planning and advocacy efforts. The great majority of the uses for evaluation within country programmes were directed at key decision points, including those related to ways to further develop the programme and to whether pilot programmes should be scaled up in the light of successful results. Confirmation of wise targeting and use comes from utilizing GEROS. The rating for the strategic intent of the evaluation has always been high, reaching 74 per cent in 2013, with "highly satisfactory" (50 per cent) or "excellent" (24 per cent).

67. Whether or not the intended goals in using the evaluations are met or not is a different matter. Anecdotal evidence is provided every year by UNICEF offices. In 2014, for example, cases of clear impact based on evaluation results and clever advocacy was seen in, inter alia, WASH regional supply management (ESAR),

national preschool policy (Georgia), anaemia control (Bhutan), health systems reform (Mauritania), donor portfolios (Colombia), child protection (Egypt), and emergency response (Philippines). The wide range of examples matches the diversity of UNICEF-assisted interventions.

68. These and other examples are often compelling. However, they do not prove that evaluation usage and impact are consistently strong and effective across the organization. In developing a more systematic approach, UNICEF has taken two related avenues:

(a) Improving the quality of the management responses;

(b) Promoting uses beyond the specific scope of management responses.

69. The finalization of a management response and the completion of the promised actions are already KPIs. They reveal high initial finalization but inconsistent completion. To understand barriers to achieving maximum impact through management responses, regional chiefs of evaluation were consulted. Their replies cluster round the following issues:

(a) Weaknesses in formulating recommendations: recommendations are often vague, unfocused or not strategic; unrealistic in terms of cost and scope; and too numerous and too detailed;

(b) Lack of stakeholder buy-in: this arises, in large part, where stakeholders have had limited engagement over the course of the evaluation, or because there are disagreements over the best course of action;

(c) Communication gaps: insufficient attention is paid to preparing for an effective management response process in terms of communication (e.g., language choices; and the need for simple briefs and guidance); weak outreach; loss of momentum through delayed attention; poor monitoring and feedback; and misunderstanding of roles;

(d) Overload: limits in the capacity to respond given contextual challenges such as successive emergencies; too many stakeholders with competing agendas; and changes in administrations.

70. These constraints can be overcome, as the positive examples of use and impact have shown. Diverse remedies are required, including enhanced participation of stakeholders (already recognized as a problematic issue in the GEROS reviews), stronger supervision of consultants to improve the quality of recommendations, and stronger internal organization. Only the national contextual issues are substantially beyond the control of UNICEF and its key partners.

71. UNICEF guidance on management responses, which is due for revision, will provide an opportunity to incorporate these insights.

72. Strengthening the management response mechanism is important. However, experience shows that influential evaluations require broader dissemination and dialogue around the issues raised by evaluation results, starting with programme partners but extending more widely. Five related lessons and lines of action stand out:

(a) Build communication and dissemination into the evaluation process from the onset, with a dedicated budget for communication;

(b) Build stronger alliances with communication colleagues to help enhance the way evaluations results are communicated;

(c) Periodically assess evaluation usage through internal surveys, making this information publicly available;

(d) Implement targeted capacity-strengthening efforts in evaluation utilization via workshops, web seminars, e-learning initiatives, peer support, and other means.

73. Drawing on all these insights, UNICEF is developing a comprehensive approach to the systematic utilization of evaluation, to be launched in 2015. The approach involves, but goes beyond, efforts to strengthen the management response mechanism, emphasizing in particular the wider communication of evaluation results and the use of evaluation evidence to inform policies and interventions.

VIII. Conclusions

74. The present report, drawing on an external assessment as well as data from internal systems, has shown that the evaluation function in UNICEF is operating well at each level and, in general, is continuing to improve year after year. The function has benefited from the sustained attention given evaluation issues by the Executive Board, and UNICEF has responded to direction from the Executive Board.

75. The report has also highlighted a number of areas for improvement. While the quality of evaluation reports has improved overall, gender issues have not yet been given adequate attention within evaluation processes. Expenditure on evaluation appears to be increasing, but there is some way to go to meet the requirements of the revised evaluation policy. Compliance with the requirement to prepare and implement a management response for each evaluation is now high, but it seems clear that the mechanism needs to be further strengthened if the potential benefits of evaluation results are to be fully realized. The report has listed these and other issues, and action is in hand to address many of the shortcomings and limitations and to build on areas of strength.

76. During this Year of Evaluation, it is important to pause and consider the vital role and potential of evaluation. This is especially true in light of General Assembly resolution 69/237, on strengthening national evaluation, and in the context of preparations for the Sustainable Development Goals and a new global development framework. It is evident that in moving forward, national development policies need to be supported by nationally led evaluation processes. Global partnerships and alliances need to find appropriate ways of incorporating evaluation insights and evidence into their processes for governance, learning and improvement. UNICEF and sister United Nations organizations also need to draw on lessons from their experience with evaluation. They must adapt and apply the insights gained to emerging development modalities as a way to support children, their families and their communities in the most efficient, effective and equitable manner possible. In this way, evaluation will help to meet the challenges facing the world in 2015 and beyond.

IX. Draft decision

77. The Executive Board

Takes note of the annual report for 2014 on the evaluation function in UNICEF (E/ICEF/2015/10).

Annex

Global thematic evaluations
Progress in implementing the 2012-2013 and the 2014-2015 global plans for thematic evaluations

Title of global thematic evaluation or other effort[15]	Status at 31 December 2014	Comment
2012-2013 Global Plan for Thematic Evaluations		
1. Multiple indicator cluster surveys	Completed	
2. Formative evaluation of MoRES	Completed	
3. Cluster lead agency role in humanitarian action	Completed	
4. Child protection in emergencies	Completed	
5. Community approaches to total sanitation	Completed	
6. Emergency preparedness systems	Completed	
7. Upstream work in the education sector	Completed	
8. Application of results-based management	Superseded	Evaluability of Strategic Plan exercise deemed more critical.
Items in the 2014-2017 plan scheduled for 2014		
1. Communication for development	Implementation	Reprogrammed from 2012-2013 Launched in February 2015
2. Violence against children	Implementation	Reprogrammed from 2012-2013 Due for completion in Q1 2015
3. Advocacy and policy change	Implementation	Reprogrammed from 2012-2013 Preparatory study under implementation
4. Education: early learning and development standards (ELDS) and school readiness	Implementation	Launched in February 2015
5. Evaluability of the Strategic Plan	Implementation	Completion scheduled for Q2 2015

[15] Items are evaluations unless otherwise indicated. Starting in 2014 efforts other than global evaluations are included in the plan, and are reported in this summary.

6. UNICEF alignment with the Millennium Development Goals	Superseded	A note on lessons learned completed in Q2 2015
7. Syria: Lessons Learned (Evaluation Synthesis)	Pending	Pending completion of major evaluations by UNICEF, the World Food Programme (WFP), and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), expected in 2015
8. Nutrition programming (Evaluation Synthesis)	Completed	
9. Evaluation methods for Innovation (Methodological development)	Implementation	Rescheduled to 2015 (see item 19 below)
Items in the 2014-2017 plan scheduled for 2015		
1. Communication for development	Implementation	Reprogrammed from 2012-2013 Launched in February 2015
2. Violence against children	Implementation	Reprogrammed from 2012-2013 Completion due Q2 2015
3. Advocacy and policy change	Implementation	Reprogrammed from 2012-2013. Preparatory study under implementation. Completion due: Q4 2015
4. Education: early learning and development standards (ELDS) and school readiness	Implementation	Launched in February 2015 Completion due: Q4 2015
5. Education and peacebuilding	Implementation	Completion due: Q3 2105
6. Evaluability of the Strategic Plan	Implementation	Completion due: Q2 2015
7. UNICEF alignment with the Millennium Development Goals	Superseded	A note on lessons learned. Completion due: Q2 2015
8. Evaluation of UNICEF response to emergency and programme strategies in the Central African Republic	Implementation	Completion due: Q2 2015
9. Evaluation of the UNICEF response to the emergency in Syria and the subregion	Implementation	Completion due: Q2 2015
10. Preventing stunting	Pending	Reprogrammed from 2012-2013 Completion due: Q1 2016
11. Partnerships: Implementation of the partnership strategy	Pending	Completion due: Q1 2016
12. Support for national capacity development	Pending	Reprogrammed from 2012-2013 Education will be the sectoral emphasis. Completion due: Q1 2016
13. Health: National health systems-strengthening	Pending	Completion due: Q2 2016

14. WASH: Safe drinking water and hygienic practices	Pending	Reprogrammed to 2016, following completion of a review of evaluation results (item 17 below).
15. Social Protection (Evaluation Synthesis)	Implementation	Reprogrammed from 2012-2013; converted to a synthesis due to amount of available material. Completion due: Q2 2015
16. Syria: Lessons Learned (Evaluation synthesis)	Pending	Joint. Pending completion of major evaluations by UNICEF, WFP, and UNHCR. Completion tbd
17. WASH programming (Evaluation synthesis)	Pending	Completion due: Q3 2015
18. Evaluating Policy (Methodological development)	Pending	Completion due: Q4 2015.
19. Evaluation methods for Innovation (Methodological development)	Implementation	Completion due: Q3 2015
Additional items scheduled for 2015		
20. Evaluation of the UNICEF response to the Syria crisis	Implementation	Completion due: Q3 2015
21. Evaluation of UNICEF response to the emergency in the Central African Republic	Implementation	Completion due: Q2 2015
22. Evaluation of UNICEF response to the Ebola epidemic in West Africa	Pending	Completion due: Q4 2015
23. Joint Evaluation of the Partnership Initiative: Renewed Effort against Child Hunger and Undernutrition (REACH)	Implementation	Completion due Q3 2015
24. Joint evaluation of the UN response to the emergency in the Central African Republic	Implementation	Completion due: Q2 2015
25. Joint evaluation of the UN response to the emergency in South Sudan	Implementation	Completion due: Q3 2015

Implementation: Work underway; analysis in process
Completed: Final report delivered; dissemination underway
Reprogrammed: Was originally scheduled at a different date
Pending: Action yet to begin; will start in the year
Superseded: Original emphasis has shifted to a modified, higher priority